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SPARTA

AND ITS LAW

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If I had to choose a motto for myself, I would take this one — "pure, dure, sûre," [pure, hard, certain] — in other words: unalterable. I would express by this the ideal of the Strong, that which nothing brings down, nothing corrupts, nothing changes; those on whom one can count, because their life is order and fidelity, in accord with the eternal.

– Savitri Devi

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INTRODUCTION

O blessed remote period when a people said to itself: "I will be - master over peoples!" For, my brothers, the best shall rule, the best also wills to rule! And where the teaching is different, there - the best is lacking.

–F. W. Nietzsche, Thus Spoke Zarathustra

Sparta was the first massive reaction against the inevitable decline brought about by the comfort of civilization, and as such, there is much to learn from it in this age of biological and moral degradation induced by a techno-industrial society. The Spartans really broke away from all vices produced by civilization, and so placed themselves at the top of the pyramid of power in their region. All current elite military traditions are somewhat heirs of what took place in Sparta, and this signals the survival of the Spartan mission.

In this book we have gathered data from various sources, giving priority to the classics. The historian and priest of the sanctuary of Apollo at Delphi, Plutarch (46-125 CE), in his work *Ancient Customs of the Spartans* and *Life of Lycurgus* gives us valuable information about Spartan life and Spartan laws, and much of what we know about Sparta we owe to him. Xenophon (430-334 BCE), historian and philosopher who sent his children to be educated in Sparta, is another good source of information, in its *Constitution of the Lacedaemonians*. Plato (427-347 BCE), in his famous *Republic* shows us the concept of how a higher state should be ruled, listing many measures that seem directly taken from Sparta, because it was his inspiration.

Today our indoctrinating academics vaguely teach that Sparta was a militaristic and brutal state completely turned to power, whose system of

education and training was very hard. We are introduced to the Spartans roughly as efficient soldiers, crude and mindless, which "were only interested in war." This is a deliberately distorted reflection of what they really were, and it is mainly because we have been taught by some decadent Athenians, spiced with the bad faith of those who currently manage the information, who seek to distort history to serve economic and other types of interests.

The Spartans left an indelible spiritual mark. The simple fact that even today the adjective "Spartan" designates qualities of hardness, severity, roughness, strength, stoicism and discipline, and that there are words that describe the attraction toward Sparta (laconophilia, philodorism), gives us an idea of the enormous role played by Sparta. It was much more than just a State: it was an archetype, the maximum exponent of the warrior doctrine. Beyond the perfect façade of brave men and athletic women hid the most religious, disciplined and ascetic of all people of Greece, who cultivated wisdom in a discrete and laconic way, far from the hustle and urban vulgarity which even then had appeared.

It is impossible to finish this introduction without reference to the movie *300*, even though most of the text was written well before the film came out in 2007. As you will be reading, you will see that the lifestyle of the historical Spartans had nothing to do with the characters that this film presents, which tries to make the Spartans more digestible to us, introducing them in a more Americanized, sympathetic way to modern minds, which is not too bad because otherwise the message may not have passed through. On a higher level, Sparta provides the perfect excuse to approach important issues.

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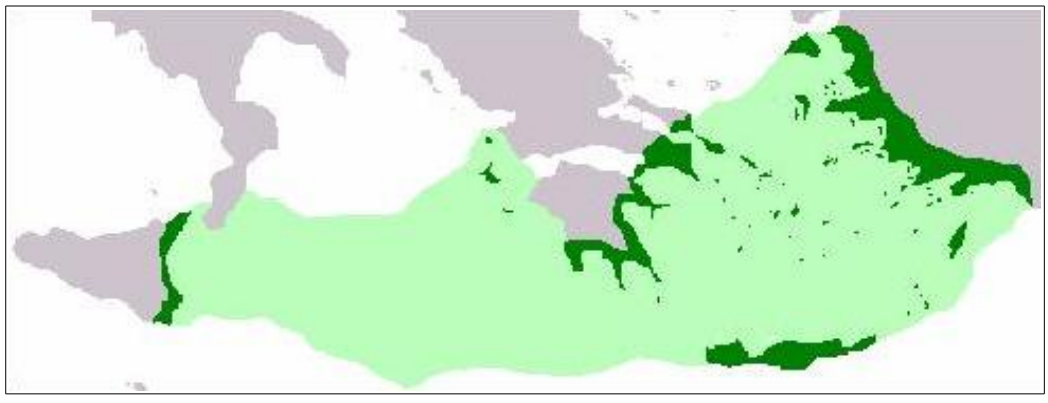
ORIGINS OF SPARTA

Before the great Indo-European invasions, Europe was populated by various pre-Indo-European peoples, some of whom had advanced societies, which we are inclined to consider as related to other civilizations and societies outside Europe.

At first, most of Greece was inhabited by Mediterranean peoples that later Hellenes invaders would call Pelasgians. Around 2700 BCE, the Minoan civilization flourished (named in memory of the legendary King Minos), based on the Mediterranean island of Crete, very influenced by Babylon and the Chaldeans, clearly related to the Etruscans and even with Egypt, and known for her telluric "bull worship," the palace of Knossos, buildings stripped of fortifications and abundant art spirals, curves, snakes, women and fish, all of which places this civilization within the orbit of the cultures of telluric character, focused on Mother Earth or *Magna Mater*.



Scope of the Minoan civilization.

According to Greek mythology, as the first peripheral Hellenes were advancing in Greece and coming into contact with its people, the Minoans ended up demanding, as an annual tribute fourteen young, male

Hellenes to be ritually slaughtered (the legend of Theseus, Ariadne, the labyrinth and the minotaur is reminiscent of this era).

By 2000 BCE there was an invasion by the first Hellenic wave that opened what in archeology is called the Bronze Age. The Hellenes were an Indo-European mass that, in successive waves quite separated in time, invaded Greece from the north. They were tough people; more united, martial and vigorous than the Pelasgians, and ended up submitting those lands despite being numerically inferior to the native population. These Hellenes were the famous Achaean Greeks referred by Homer and the Egyptian inscriptions. They brought their gods, solar symbols (including the swastika, later used by Sparta), the chariots, the taste for the amber, fortified settlements, Indo-European language (Greek, who would end up imposing itself on the indigenous population), Nordic blood, patriarchy and hunter-warrior traditions.

The Achaeans settled in Greece, establishing themselves as the dominant caste, without at first reaching Crete. The first destruction of the Minoan palaces (around 1700 BCE) was probably due to a large earthquake of which there is evidence; not Achaean invasion.

The Minoan and Mycenaean civilizations, around 1800-1400 BCE.

The Achaeans, finally, opened the way for the Mycenaean civilization, centered on the city of Mycenae, Argolis. In 1400 BCE, the Achaeans took by force the island of Crete, destroying the palaces and finally ending, to some extent, the Minoan civilization; eventually adopting some of its outward forms—what many uprooted invaders who trample a superior, but already declining civilization, do. These Achaeans were the ones who, around 1260 BCE, besieged and razed Troy in a crusade of the West-East capable to unite all the Achaeans—generally prone to war between themselves—in a common enterprise. In the *Iliad* Homer describes them as a band of barbarians with mentality and appearance of Vikings sweeping the refined and civilized Troy. After this process, the entire western coast of Asia Minor, the Black Sea and the Bosphorus was subject to Greek influence: a process that will have a huge weight upon history.

Around 1200 BCE there was, again, a huge migration flow. Countless Indo-European peoples moved to the South in great tumult and to the East. The entire eastern Mediterranean suffered major seizures under the so-called "Sea Peoples" and other Indo-European tribes that invaded Turkey, Palestine, Egypt and the steppes of Eastern Europe, and opened the archaeological Iron Age in the Eastern Mediterranean.

As for the Mycenaean civilization of the Achaeans, it was also destroyed by one of these invasions. The apocalyptic references in the traditional Greek history (fire, destruction, death) made many historians mistakenly think in large earthquakes or riots. In this legendary invasion, much larger than the previous, iron weapons were used, superior than the bronze weapons of the Achaeans. The Dorians, belonging to such migration and ancestors of the Spartans, broke into Greece with extreme violence, destroying in their path cities, palaces and villages. The Dorians took Crete and the Mycenaean civilization of the Achaeans abruptly disappeared from the archaeological record. Argolis (on Mycenae ground) never forgot this, and although now with Dorian blood the state of Argos and its domains would stubbornly oppose the Spartan power in later centuries.

The former settlement of the Dorians had been in the Balkans and in Macedonia, where they lived in a barbarous or semi-barbarous state. They had not always lived in the area but ended up there as a result of another migration from further north. The most sensible thesis considers the place of origin of the Dorians along with the Celts, Italics, Illyrians and the remaining Greeks, the so-called Tumulus Culture and the latter Urnfield Cultures and Halstatt Culture: proto-Indo-European civilizations, tribal and semi-barbarous that flourished in Central Europe north of the Alps and southern Scandinavia. According to the Greek historian Herodotus, the Dorians had their primordial home "among the snows." Genetically, Dorians seem to belong to *R1b* paternal lineage, that dominates Western Europe today.

Across Europe, after the invasions there was a contest (open first and then more subtle) between the martial mentality of the new invaders from the North and the native mentality of concupiscence. The East, Finland, Italy, the Iberian Peninsula and Greece were examples of this struggle, and usually the result was always the same: the Indo-European invaders prevailed despite their overwhelming numerical inferiority. Then they settled as nobility over a mob descendant of aboriginals and subjected peoples. In the Peloponnesus, this latent struggle resulted in the superhuman fruit of Sparta, just as, later, the struggle between Italic and Etruscan led to Rome.

Every era and every place has its own master race. At that time and place the Dorians were the dominant race. Of Nordic appearance, a soul of ice and fire, an inborn discipline and a brutal warrior vocation so natural to them distinguished them from the more peaceful natives, fully dedicated to the pleasures of the lower abdomen. The Dorians in particular (and among them specifically the Spartans, who kept themselves strictly separated from the rest of the people) maintained their original features longer than the other Hellenes: centuries after the Dorian invasion blond hair and tall stature were still considered the characteristic of the Spartan. This is because, as in India, the great epic of ancient invasion remained for a long time in the collective memory of the

people; and the racism of the Dorians, along with their insistence on remaining a selected elite, led to a system of racial separation which preserved for centuries the characteristics of the original invaders.

The name of the Dorians comes from Dorus, son of the legendary Helen (Helen of Troy was before Helen of Sparta). The aristocrats were called Heracleidae, as claimed descent also from Heracles, thus attributing divine ancestry. Divided into three tribes, the Dorians were led by the royal lineage, as well as oracles and Hellenic priests equivalent to the Celtic Druids. For the Heracleidae, the invasion of Greece was a divine command nominally from Apollo "the Hyperborean," their favorite god.

During the four centuries, from 1200 BCE to 800 BCE, there was a stage that modern historiography called "Greek Middle Ages," when the Dorians erected themselves as the native aristocracy and formed small "feudal" kingdoms constantly fighting against each other, as the uprooted invaders from all eras liked to do. This stage was a heroic, individualistic age of personal glory, in which the warriors sought a glorious sunset. Many battles still were decided by a duel of champions: the greatest warrior of one side faced the best of the other. This represents the heroic but foolish mentality of the time: "the strong destroy each other and the weak continue to live."

By that time Greece had not yet reached the image of the refined warrior equivalent to the medieval knight: the Dorians were still barbarians. For better or worse, all great civilizations began with hordes of warriors and hunters, tightly bound by ties of clan, and strongly disciplined by a militarized lifestyle. Nietzsche already noted the importance of the "barbarian" character in the formation of all aristocracy. For him, even when such invaders are established and form states, the basic underlying character is still, and subtly, barbaric in the forms of these raising states.

During the Greek Middle Ages, in 1104 BCE, the Heracleidae reached the Peloponnesus. Spartan history explained quite correctly that

the Dorians invaded Greece eighty years after the destruction of Troy and, led by King Aristodemus, conquered the peninsula. Pausanias (second century, not to be confused with the Spartan prince who defeated the Persians at the battle of Plataea), in his *Description of Greece*, goes into more detail. He says that the Dorians, from a mountainous region of northern Greece called Oeta and guided by Hilo, a "son of Heracles" expelled from the Peloponnesus the Mycenaean Achaeans.

However, an Achaean counteroffensive held them back. Then, in a final process called Return of the Heracleidae, the Dorians definitely settled in the Peloponnesus and prevailed over the Achaeans, with great disturbances in the peninsula. The phrase-dogma of the "Return of the Heracleidae" was the way the Dorians had to justify the invasion of the Peloponnesus: noble Dorian families, distantly related to the Achaean noble families (both Dorians and Achaeans were Greeks), claimed what "rightfully" was theirs.

The new stream of Indo-European blood, courtesy of the Dorians, would eventually revitalize the ancient Hellas, keeping it in the spiritual and physical forefront of the time along with Persia, India, an Egypt that was not by then what it used to be, and China. In the south of the Peloponnesus peninsula, the Dorians established their main center, the city of Sparta, also known by its former name, Lacedaemon. The territory under the dominion of Sparta was known as Laconia.

The original city of Sparta or Lacedaemon was not properly a city; it consisted of a "cluster" of five villages (Pitan, Cynosur, Meso, Limnas and Amiclas, initially military garrisons) different but close and united, each with its high priest. The settlements always lacked defensive walls, proudly confident in the discipline and ferocity of their warriors. Antalcidas went on to say that "the young men are the walls of Sparta, and the points of their spears its boundaries." The lack of walls helped them to stay alert and not allow in any relaxing. Hitler would say, with an identical mentality: "A too great feeling of security provokes, in the long run, a relaxation of forces. I think the best wall will always be a wall of human chests!"

Sparta, however, was surrounded by natural defenses, as it was situated in the valley of the river Eurotas, between high mountains, with the Taygetos mountain range to the west and Parnon at the east. However, the lack of walls demonstrates the safety and confidence of the Spartans as well as certain arrogance.

In ancient Hellas three Indo-European streams would end up as the main ones: Firstly the rough Dorians, who spoke a Greek dialect that used the *a* and *r*. On the other hand, the soft Ionians, who came from a Greek invasion before the Dorians, dressed in flowing robes, oriental style, and spoke a kinder Greek dialect to the ear, which employed much *i* and the *s*. Other peoples of Greece were called Aeolians, who spoke a dialect that seemed a mix of Dorian and Ionian, and came from the ancient, mixed Achaean and to some extent from the Pelasgians and later with the invading Dorians and Ionians—thus sometimes also called, erroneously, Achaeans.

FIRST DEVELOPMENT OF SPARTA: THE MESSENIAN WARS

During the eighth century BCE, Sparta, like other peoples of Hellas, was a small city-state ruled by a monarchy and aristocratic oligarchy of Doric descent. Driven by population growth and a need for resources and power, the Spartans looked to the West and decided that beyond the mountains Taygetus, in Messenia would create a nation of slaves to serve them.

The geopolitics of Laconia did not leave them much choice: they were on a rough terrain and isolated by mountains and a non-navigable river. Laconia was something like the heartland, or cardial region of the Peloponnesus: an area inaccessible to any power that used the sea as a vector to project their power. So it was well protected from abroad, but in return the Laconians could not afford to sea as the coast was steep and there was only one suitable site to establish a port at Gythium, 43 km from the capital (unlike Piraeus, which was very close to Athens). Therefore, they could not follow the example of the Athenians, who jumped from island to island, colonizing the coasts and drawing large amounts of wheat from the north shore of the Black Sea.

On the other hand, the neighboring kingdom of Messenia had the most fertile plains of Hellas (“good for planting, good for plowing” said Tyrtaeus; “a happy grassland” the Spartans called it). By annexing it they would achieve autarkic supply of food and no longer need to rely on remote territories, trade, merchants, strategic islands, and maritime straits easy to control by the enemy or naval fleet.

Moreover, they would not cosmopolitanize, as usual with all trading nations. Sparta, then, was shaping up as a telurocracy—a geopolitical

power of clearly continental type—opposed to the maritime Athenian thalassocracy.

Around 743 BCE, at a time when the Messenians were feasting and offering sacrifices to their gods, Sparta sent three lads dressed as maids. These little soldiers, well trained, carried short swords under their robes, and had no trouble infiltrating the carefree party atmosphere in Messenian territory. From inside they stalked the unarmed Messenia crowd, and at a given signal they began a bloody carnage in the thick of the crowd, before the Messenia mass subdued the boys. After the incident the Messenians grouped and, enraged, armed themselves and marched into Laconia. In the fight that broke out, one of the kings of Sparta fell, and the First Messenia War began (described by Tyrtaeus and Pausanias, who in turn relied on Myron of Priene).

After four years of war and a great battle, neither side emerged victorious. That was a deaf resistance, guerrilla style, and probably conventional armies had been relatively disrupted after the first battle. Although not adopting yet the tactics of the phalanx or Hoplite equipment, the most decisive actions were hand strikes, raids and sieges. However, the Messenians had suffered so many losses that a Messenian warlord, Aristodemus and his men, retreated to a fortress on Mount Ithome, and visited the oracle for advice. The oracle answered that to resist the Spartans a maiden of an ancient and respectable Messenian family should be sacrificed to the gods. Aristodemus, who was to be a great patriot, did not hesitate to sacrifice his own daughter. When the Spartans heard this, they rushed to make peace with the Messenians as, superstitious or not, they attached great importance to such ritual matters.

After some years, however, the Spartans decided to attack the Messenians again. There was another great battle, but the victory yet again did not go for any of the two sides. And since the Messenian king had fallen, the leader Aristodemus went to reign over the Messenians. In the fifth year of his reign he was able to expel from his territory the Spartan forces. However, Aristodemus seemed to be under a dark curse.

In a Messenian temple a shield fell from the hand of the statue of the goddess Artemis. The sacrificed daughter of Aristodemus appeared as ethereal figure and asked him to take off his armor.

Artemis did it, and she crowned him with a golden crown, dressed in a white robe. According to the mentality of the time, all these omens meant that the death of Aristodemus was coming. Ancient peoples took these things very seriously. It was not superstition but the unraveling of the archetypal signs, repeated on Earth and echoing what was happening in the sky. Accordingly, black premonitions gravitated around Aristodemus. A dense depression took over his mind. He began to think that he and his nation were condemned to slavery. Believing he had sacrificed his daughter in vain, he committed suicide over her grave. The Greeks said that "one whom the gods wish to destroy they first make him crazy."

The war lasted a total of nineteen years, and it was only after this time that the Spartans could exterminate Messenian resistance and raze the fortress of Ithome. Some Messenians fled the Peloponnesian, and those who remained were treated more harshly than the very Helots of Laconia. They were relegated to be peasant vassals of Sparta at the Messenia fertile plain, and also forced them to pay half of the production of their land to their Spartan masters.

But the Messenians, much more numerous than the Spartans, were not satisfied with this situation of second-class and submitted people. Two generations after the First Messenian War a bold leader named Aristomenes, supported by the states of Argos and Arcadia, preached rebellion against Sparta. Following this, in the seventh century BCE the Second Messenian War began. With a band of loyal followers, Aristomenes starred numerous raids on Spartan territory, even weeping out two populations.

Three times he celebrated a Hecatomb sacrifice, a ritual only allowed to perform to those who had killed more than a hundred enemies. The Messenians, for the first time, used the Hoplite phalanx tactics

characterized by close order formations, barricading behind a shield wall from which the spears stabbed with impunity. The Spartans had not yet adopted this form of combat from the Middle East, and suffered catastrophic casualties in the Battle of Hysiae.

Sparta then consulted the oracle of Delphi. There they were told to go to Athens to procure a leader. This was not supposed to please the Spartans, as their relations with Athens were not good, and neither pleased the Athenians for the same reason, but both States respected the decisions of Delphi and did not object. The Athenians, however, acted in bad faith: they sent a lame teacher called Tyrtaeus (known to posterity as Tyrtaeus of Sparta), thinking that he would not have value as military captain.

However, Tyrtaeus was a great poet. His chants of war inflamed the martial ardor of the Spartans and raised their morale. In the next battle against the Messenians, the Spartans marched already inflamed and in phalanx combat, singing his songs. With such impulse they defeated Aristomenes in the Battle of the Great Pit, forcing the Messenians to retreat to another mountain fortress called Ira, at whose feet the Spartan camp was established. This state of siege, in which guerrillas returned stronger than during the first war, lasted eleven years. Aristomenes often managed to break the Spartan siege in Ira and head toward Laconia, subjected to pillage. Twice he was captured by the Spartans and twice escaped.

The third time was captured along with fifty of his men, and they were paraded victoriously through Sparta as if they were a Roman triumph. Then they were taken to the foot of Mount Taygetos and thrown off a cliff, the famous Kaiada. According to Greek history, only Aristomenes miraculously survived the fall and was able to leave the abyss following a fox. Soon, he was in the fortress of Ira in front of his men.

But the Spartans ended infiltrating a spy into the fortress, and one night, after Aristomenes returned from one of his raids, the fort was

betrayed. In the fierce battle that followed it is said Aristomenes was wounded and, clasping his bravest men, broke the Spartan lines and fled to Rome, where he died soon after. It is more than likely that this myth was built to revitalize Messenian pride: even 250 years later it was said that Aristomenes was seen in a battlefield fighting against the Spartans.

The Spartans conquered by spear and sword enough land to support all their people and maintain the other peoples subjected. They subjugated the Messenians, beat hostile crowds far more numerous than themselves and indisputably subjected them to their rule. Messenian coastal populations became a sort of middle-class commercial and navy populations, and the rest of the country, mere Helots (peasant rabble). Encompassing the entire southern half of the Peloponnesus, including the original territory of Laconia and the conquered land of Messenia, Sparta became the largest state in all Hellas by far—three times larger than the Attic state of Athens.

Unlike other Hellenic states, Sparta had chosen to be a continental land power of compact territory instead of engaging in seafaring and colonizing areas outside Greece, as other Hellenic states did in Asia Minor, Italy, the Black Sea or Africa. At least in part this was due to its immense agricultural potential: Messenia was the most fertile of the Greek world by far, while Athens suffered chronic lack of grain and continuously had to go to the Black Sea coast to look for it. Sparta had no such problems.

Think for a moment about how these battles, terribly fierce and long, could have influenced the Spartan character. The Messenian Wars marked forever their mentality. Ultimately, the teachers of the Spartans were their own enemies and the wars forced upon them. They were the ones who instituted in Sparta military paranoia and preparation for combat that characterized it; who forced Spartan aristocracy enter into crisis and, by necessity, find the best way to prevail over their enemies. Sparta would never have been what it became if in combat it had hit a cowardly people. Holding a long struggle against high-quality elements, bold and fearsome enemies to boast, aroused the Spartan force. Perhaps

that is the only advantage of the unfortunate fratricidal wars, so typical of Europe.

LYCURGUS AND THE REVOLUTION

As said, between 1200 and 800 BCE, there were 400 years of "dark age" or Greek Middle Ages. The men were acting on personal glory; their behavior was inspired by the legendary feats of ancient individualist heroes. Blood brothers senselessly killed each other instead of uniting in a common will and not seeking personal glory but the glory of their people. Sparta herself was immersed in this heroic but fratricidal system, where every man was walking his way seeking his own immortality. Noble Dorians killed each other while their real enemies proliferated. Sparta was but a realm of many that existed in Hellas, and also pretty tumultuous and chaotic. But at the end of the dark ages came a figure that heralded a new era: Lycurgus, the father of Sparta, the spokesman of Dorian blood: the man who made what Sparta would later become.

After quelling the second Messenian rebellion with great difficulty, the Spartans found themselves contemplating the disturbing picture of being on the brink of defeat; very vulnerable, and on the reins of a resentful and hostile foreign population that surpassed them in quantity of more than ten to one. And they were not easy slaves to subjugate, but Greek peoples who retained their identity, pride and will to power. All Spartans knew full well that the subjugated would rebel again one day sooner or later and that they must be prepared for the occasion. In this tense atmosphere, if Sparta could preserve its purity and survive it was thanks to Lycurgus.

It is not known when Lycurgus lived. Some say he belongs to the ninth century BCE, that is, before the Messenian wars, others to the eighth century, and others to the seventh. In any case, his extraordinary personality is of an ancestral legislator or "giver of tables." Lycurgus is half historical and half legendary. His name means "conductor of wolves." He was a veteran of the Messenian wars and the Heracleidae, and belonged to the royal line of the Agis, youngest son of King

Eunomos, who had softened his regime to please the crowds. But these crowds were emboldened and the king fell stabbed with a butcher knife. Polydectes inherited the kingdom, his eldest son, but, having died suddenly, Lycurgus, his younger brother, succeeded to the throne. His reign lasted eight months but it was so right, fair and orderly compared to the previous anarchy that won the respect of his people forever. When Lycurgus knew that his sister-in-law (the former queen) was pregnant of his brother and late King, he announced that the fruit of such pregnancy would inherit the throne, the right thing, and therefore Lycurgus would become merely regent.

But the queen was an ambitious woman who wanted to continue enthroned, so she proposed Lycurgus to marry her and get rid of the baby as soon as he was born, so they could become king and queen for life, and after them his own descendants. Lycurgus was furious at the proposal and rejected it vehemently. However, as a negative response would have meant that the party of the queen rise up in arms, he falsely sent messengers to accept the proposition. But when the baby was born, he sent servants with orders that if the child was a girl to be delivered to the mother; if boy to be handed over to him.

A male baby was born and was delivered as ordered. During a night he dined with military Spartans leaders and Lycurgus ordered the child to be brought, with the idea to let the leaders know there was already an heir. Lifting him with his arms and set him on the Spartan throne, said "Men of Sparta, here is a king born to us!" And since the heir still had no name, he named him Charilaus, "joy of the people." With this gesture, Lycurgus affirmed his loyalty to the heir and future king and made it clear that he should be protected, and that he became his guardian and protector until he was old enough to rule.

Meanwhile, Lycurgus as Regent was highly revered by the people, who admired his uprightness, honesty and wisdom. The queen mother, however, had not forgiven his refusal and that he kidnapped and made Charilaus known. Due to manipulation and intrigues, she spread the rumor that Lycurgus was conspiring to murder his nephew and become

king of Sparta. When this rumor reached the ears of Lycurgus, he went into exile until Charilaus was old enough to reign, marriage and become heir to the Spartan throne. In his exile Lycurgus traveled through different kingdoms studying their laws and customs in order to improve the Spartan after his return. The first country he visited was the island of Crete, the Dorian settlement after Mycenae and of renowned wisdom, where he befriended the wise Tales, convincing him to go to Sparta to help him in his purpose.

Tales appeared in Sparta as a musician-poet, a kind of minstrel, throwing songs of honor and discipline to the people of Sparta, and preparing them for what was to come. The greedy and ambitious willfully abandoned their desire for wealth and material luxuries in the sake of unity in a common will with their race. Lycurgus also visited Ionia, where he not only studied Homer, but legend says that he knew him personally (here it is clear that certain dates do not add up). Lycurgus compiled his work and then made it known to his people, who liked it very much initiating the Spartan celebration of Homer. Another legendary feat attributed to Lycurgus was the founding of the Olympics.

Lycurgus also traveled to Egypt, where he spent time studying the Army training. He was fascinated by the fact that in Egypt the soldiers were lifelong soldiers, as in other nations warriors were called to arms in war and returned to their previous work in peacetime. Although this certainly was not the only purpose of his trip to Egypt, at the time it was a place visited by all those who sought initiation of ancient wisdom.

The Spartan Aristocrates says that Lycurgus also traveled to Iberia, Libya and India, where he met the famous wise gymnosophists, with whom Alexander would also meet centuries later. The gymnosophist school valued, among other things, nudity to the inclemency of weather as a method to tan the skin and make the body and spirit resistant in general. As we will see later, this idea was greatly appreciated in Spartan education.

While Lycurgus was out, Sparta declined. The laws were not obeyed

and there was no executive power to punish offenders. Upright men longed the time of the regency of Lycurgus and begged him: "It is true we have kings bearing the marks and assume the titles of royalty, but as for the qualities of their minds, nothing distinguishes them from their subjects. Only you have a nature made to rule and a genius to gain obedience."

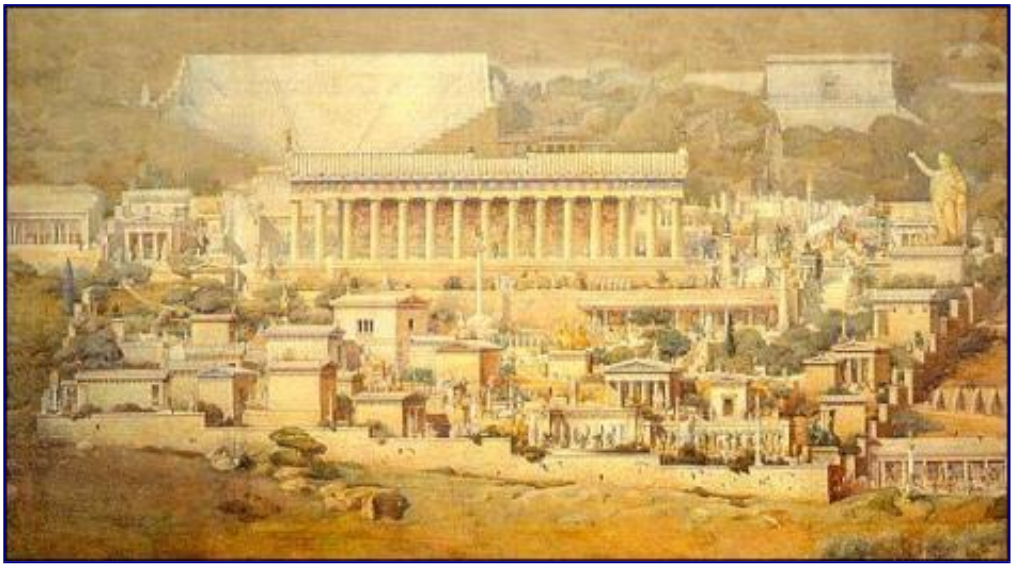
Lycurgus returned to Sparta and his first action was to bring together thirty of the greatest military leaders to inform them of his plans. After these men swore loyalty he ordered to join, armed, in the market square at dawn with their followers to instill terror in the hearts of those who would reject the changes he planned. He compiled a blacklist of potential enemies to hunt them down and eliminate if needed. That day the square was packed with fanatical followers of Lycurgus, and the effect was so impressive that the king fled to the temple of Athena, fearing a conspiracy against him. But Lycurgus sent a messenger to inform him that all he wanted was to introduce new legislation to improve and strengthen Sparta. Thus reassured, the king left the temple and headed to the square, and joined the party of Lycurgus. With Lycurgus, the two kings and thirty military leaders, the party had thirty-three members.

But even with the support of the king, what Lycurgus had made was clearly a coup, a conquest of power or imposition of his will: a revolution. He had united his people, instilling a sense of cohesion that should characterize any grand alliance. The individual is nothing and the species everything. Or as Hitler would say to his followers: "You are nothing, your *Volk* is everything."

After developing his laws and make kings sworn they would respect them, Lycurgus reported that he would travel to the shrine of Delphi (the most important religious center of Hellas, considered "navel of the world") in search of counsel from Apollo, to ratify their decision. Near Delphi, marginal nucleus of Dorian population in the slopes of Mount Parnassus, he saw a shrine to this god with a legend that in that spot Apollo had killed the serpent Python (a telluric idol related to pre-Indo-

European peoples). A whole school was there for all initiatory mysteries of Delphi. These mysteries were a venerable institution, Dorian to the core, to which the notables of all Hellas looked for advice, initiation, and wisdom. It was a highly strategic location: from the sea, the sanctuary dominates the heights and seems to lie above the navigator, and from Delphi, everything that comes and leaves the Gulf of Corinth is seen clearly.

The sanctuary was saying, "Here we are the Greeks, dominating the naval and the trade traffic it brings, and we are vigilant." In the temple of Apollo was a Sibyl, a virgin priestess who believed he had a special bond with this god and, like him, gifts of clairvoyance that were able to see the future and make prophecies. After receiving Lycurgus the Sibyl called him "more god than man" and claimed he was a chosen of the gods, and announced that his laws were good and blessed his plans to establish the Spartan constitution, which would make the kingdom of Sparta the most famous of the world.



This modern reconstruction recreates how the sanctuary of Delphi must have looked in ancient times. The road is strewn of stony plates that the Greek city-states donated to the oracle. The plates are adorned with elaborate writings and long dedications, except the Spartan plate, which reads: "To the oracle of Delphi, from Sparta."

With the blessing of the priestess, Lycurgus established the Spartan constitution and his laws were so harsh and severe that he prohibited writing them down: only as oral tradition so that, over years of training, each individual assimilated them in his soul, by practice and internalization: something which would make him a carrier of such laws wherever he went and in any situation. His intention was not to create a mechanical, grid, stiff and cold system, but a living wheel: flexible and adaptable not only as common sense and logic, but also as an ancestral intuition and instinct.

By then Sparta was surrounded by hostile neighbors difficult to repel and possessed some nine thousand, non-militarized men to act in case of war or crisis. Lycurgus foresaw that if each of them was to be selected and trained hard in the arts of war since childhood, they would achieve victory over their opponents in spite of being outnumbered. Over generations, the people of Sparta would harden so much that would not be afraid of their enemies, and their fame would spread to the four cardinal points. Since then, Spartan boys became more than warriors: natural-born fighters with a lifelong mission, entirely committed in body and a soul sacrificed in honor of their homeland. They became, then, soldiers; perhaps the first professional soldiers in Europe.

Lycurgus did not exactly intend establishing a kind of democracy. On one occasion a man had before him a compliment of democracy, giving a fiery speech. Lycurgus, having heard all the talk in silence, replied: “Good, now go and set an example by establishing a democracy at home.” Keep in mind that even in those ancient “democracies” only Greek citizens voted, i.e. men of pure Hellenic blood who had reached the majority of age. They had nothing to do with our modern idea. Despite of this, there is no shortage of deceivers today who try to sell us that Sparta was a kind of communist system just because the state was omnipresent and the Spartans knew how to share among them.

Lycurgus’ revolution was not entirely peaceful. The Spartan people soon realized that the laws were extremely hard even for them. A considerable lineage of Dorian Greeks had become accustomed to the

comfort and luxury that always come victorious when not maintained on guard. The sober, ascetic and martial socialism preached by Lycurgus, which required all young men to part from their families and eat with their comrades, was not well received among many, especially the rich and affluent. There was a wave of outrage and an angry mob gathered to protest against Lycurgus. The mob was composed especially by the former wealthy individuals who found degrading the military rule that prohibited eating except on a collectively table of comrades in arms. When Lycurgus appeared, the crowd began to stone him and he was forced to flee to avoid death by stoning. The angry mob chased him but Lycurgus—robust despite his age—was so fast that soon after only a young man named Alexander was at his heels.

When Lycurgus turned to see who was chasing him with such agility, Alexander struck him in the face with a stick, gouging out an eye. Lycurgus gave no sign of pain and just stood with his bloodied face to face his pursuer. When the rest of the crowd arrived they saw what the young man had done: a venerable old man, standing solemnly before them, bleeding with an empty eye. Those were very respectful times for the elderly, especially men as charismatic and noble as Lycurgus. Instantly they must have felt immense guilt. Embarrassed, the crowd accompanied Lycurgus to his home to show their apologies, and delivered Alexander to him to punish him as he saw fit. Lycurgus, now one-eyed, did not rebuke the young, but he invited Alexander to live with him as a student. The young man soon learned to admire and emulate the austere and pure way of life of his mentor. As tradition derived from that event, the Senators gave up the habit of attending state meetings with batons.

After the Spartan people swore the laws of Lycurgus, he decided to leave Sparta for the rest of his days. His mission was accomplished and he knew it; now he had to die giving an example of a strong will. Feeling nostalgic for his homeland and being unable to live away from her, he committed suicide by starvation. A man born for a particular purpose, once fulfilled that purpose he has no reason to linger earthbound. The

ritual suicide has been practiced by many exceptional men whose mission was over, men who, after serving their fate, nothing was left in the world; they had lost the right to life. Nietzsche also spoke of voluntary death: “Many die too late, and some die too early. Yet strange soundeth the precept: “Die at the right time!”

Another version relates that before leaving Delphi, Lycurgus made the Spartan people swore to follow their laws at least until he returned from Delphi. And, having committed suicide without ever returning to Sparta, the Spartans were left with no choice but to always abide by the laws of Lycurgus.

For Sparta, Lycurgus was something of a precursor, a vanguard leader, a messenger before his time. He had royal power, and the sacred charisma of great leaders, kings, saints and emperors, “certain power that drew the wills” in the words of Plutarch. He came and transformed a chaotic and overflowing mass with great potential in the most effective army of Earth. He imprinted his world with a new inertia—his—, and gave a new aspect: what he wanted. After his death, a temple was erected in his honor and he was worshiped like a god. And it was from his time that not only Sparta but all Greece shone again: the beginnings of the Classic Age.

Xenophon greatly admired Lycurgus saying that he “reached the highest limit of wisdom” (*Constitution of the Lacedaemonians*, 1). Savitri Devi referred to him as “the divine Lycurgus” and recalled that “the laws of Lycurgus had been dictated by Apollo at Delphi” (*The Hyperborean*). Gobineau appreciated the salvation led by the legislation of Lycurgus: “The Spartans were few in number but big-hearted, greedy and violent: a bad legislation would have turned them into poor devils. Lycurgus transformed them into heroic bandits” (*An Essay on the Inequality of the Human Races*, book I, chapter V).

THE NEW SPARTA

Forced to learn lessons after their very long wars with the Messenians, and illuminated by the laws of Lycurgus, the Spartans proceeded to build an army-camp nation. It was the knowledge of the power of subversion of the enemy and having been about to fall into their hands which made Sparta what later came to be. It was the paranoia of security, the distrust of the submitted peoples, what wrought Sparta over other Hellenic states and made them surrender to Lycurgus. As the Spartans were obsessed that their subjects, much more numerous, might rebel against their authority again, they chose to harden themselves and raise a new type of man under an authoritarian, totalitarian, militaristic, incorruptible and unquestionable power that they should obey blindly. Thereafter, the laws of Lycurgus acquired their greatest splendor. This was the period from which Sparta was unique in Hellas, the period in which "something changed," the time when the people of Sparta, quietly and discreetly, suffered the strangest of transformations.

What was precisely this mutation? Among other things, the Spartans learned to direct their aggression not only against their enemies and rivals, but primarily against themselves and their peers in order to stimulate, purify and perfect themselves. In addition to tightening the practitioner, such behavior subtly loomed in the minds of the enemies the subconscious question, "If you do this to yourself, what will you do to your enemies?" Thus was born, then, military asceticism.

The Spartans were militarized. All the people went on organizational mood. Sparta became socialist and totalitarian—understood in its original sense of a civilization organized and disciplined by a gifted elite, formed with its best sons, and based on value-blood-spiritual-biological criteria. Such socialism is something that only could have taken place in the Iron Age, as it tried to bring together what was broken, and was more

like an aristocracy than a democracy. Spengler described this type of militarist-imperialist-patriarchal system in his *Prussianism and Socialism*, noting how this system resurfaces again and again in history, incarnating in the larger towns and leading to empires. (Spengler distinguishes four superior socialisms: the Roman Empire, the Spanish Empire, the British Empire and Prussia, which resulted in the Second Reich. We would add two more socialisms: Sparta and the Third Reich.)

The caste organization in Sparta was tripartite: warriors, "bourgeois" and slaves.

(1) The Spartiates (Greek: *Σπαρτιάται*, "Spartans"). The upper class was that of the *Astoi*, *Damos* or citizens: the aristocracy, consisting of Dorian Spartans of pure lineage who owned *kleros* (a package of land) and that called themselves *Spartiates* or *Homoioi* (the same). To be "equal," however, one had to be part of that jealous clan. That closed, selective and elitist Order was the aristocracy of Sparta, which itself was strongly hierarchical and required as a condition of membership being born within a pure-blooded Spartan family, passing through strict eugenics (from the Greek word meaning "good birth") and having passed awful trials during instruction. Only Spartan men, brutally trained and militarized to the core, were able to bear arms; though forbidden to fight each other in any way that was not combat. They could not afford the honor duels where men necessary fall instead of defending their country.

The custom of calling themselves "equal" is rooted in the collective unconscious of Indo-Europeans, as the Romans called each other "peers" like the English aristocrats, a word of the same meaning. All this reveals a sanctification of what is one's own and similar, as well as a disregard for the foreign. In this establishment, the elite all *Hippeis* aspired was an elite guard of 300 men under 30 years.

The Spartiates were the descendants of the old army of Dorian invaders and their families, that is, the warrior nobility of the ancient Dorians: maybe the best blood of Hellas. They formed, therefore, the actual Spartan warrior caste, where there also came all priests. The caste

of citizens, including women and children, never had more than 20,000 members. They were ten times less than the helots.

(2) The *Perioeci* (or *perioikoi*) means peripheral, people around, neighbors. They formed the middle class, a kind of bourgeoisie. They lived in villages with local government, without autonomy in military and foreign policy, and engaged mainly in trading, blacksmithing and crafts, activities that were forbidden to the Spartans. The *perioeci*, then, were those who were in charge of the money and the "logistics." They were probably descendants of the lower strata of the ancient Dorian population mixed with the Achaeans, who in turn had previously dominated the Pelasgians and were mixed to some extent with them. They also came from people who had not resisted Sparta during the process of defining the polis. All coastal cities had Messenian *perioeci* status. The *perioeci* were entitled to a small *kleros*, lower in quality than the plain plots of Messenia, and they often supervised the helots, acting as intermediaries or foremen between them and the Spartans. They also constituted the crew of the navy (both commercial and naval war). The intermediaries between the *perioeci* and the Spartans were the Harmosts, twenty Spartans who administered the *perioeci*. Through them came to Sparta the food, weapons and craft goods.

(3) The Helots: Also called *heílotes* ("captives"), were at the bottom of social stratification. Most were Messenians, Pelasgians and other pre-Indo-Europeans in Greece, or mixtures between them. Their condition was dedicated servants to work the fields in perpetuity, but allowed to have possessions, that is, private property. A fixed amount of their crops was destined for their Spartan master, and the rest for them.

The helots were legally tied to the land and were forbidden to leave the *kleros* they cultivated, although it was forbidden to expel them from it. As the status was not slavery, they could not be bought or sold. Thanks to these feudal measures Sparta never had to import large numbers of foreign slaves, as Athens ended up doing.

Helots mortally hated the arrogant Spartan nobility (Cinadon said

they wanted to “eat them raw”), for which were often despised and humiliated. Only the unity, the savagery, the warlike character, and the organizational capacity and cruelty of the Spartan elite prevented them from being in continual rebellion. Because whenever a Spartiate ran into them they knew they were before a being who would have no difficulty in killing many with his own hands. This made the helot respect and fear the Spartiate, and Sparta was doing whatever necessary to cultivate this image. In Sparta, the castes knew each other: helots knew that the Spartans were superior and the Spartans knew the helots were their inferiors.

Helot numbers, according to the Greek historian Thucydides (460-395 BCE), ranged between 150,000 and 200,000. As markers of identity they should carry a shaved head, leather clothes and *kyne*: a dog-skin cap. Failing to comply to these outfits was punished with the penalty of death and a fine for the master of the helot.

EUGENICS AND EARLY CHILDREARING

The Spartan upbringing exudes what Nietzsche called “master morality” referring to the superior man, as opposed to “slave morality” that, for example, Christianity uses. What the Spartans did was to maximize natural selection to obtain a race of perfect men and women. Today, the cult of perfection raises uproar among the champions of the politically correct, always happy to say that perfection is unattainable, thereby seeking to justify and excuse their own laziness and even avoid approaching the subject. But Lycurgus and his disciples had contemplated this ideal of perfection as a goal and to achieve it they renounced all scruple adopting a detached philosophy, “beyond good and evil” in the vernacular.

It can be said that the system of eugenics preceded even birth, because the young pregnant maid and future mother practiced special exercises designed to encourage that their future child was born healthy and strong, and that labor was easy. There is nothing more insane than the present day, when women who have not played sports in their lives are forced to give birth in traumatic ways without the necessary physical and mental preparation, like a soldier going to war without military training.

Once the baby was born, the mother bathed him in wine. According to the Spartan custom body contact with the wine made the epileptics, decrepit and sickly enter into convulsions and fainted, so that the weak died soon, or at least could be identified for disposal, but the strong were as hardened steel. This may seem a kind of baseless superstition, but Aristotle himself defended it and the French Enlightenment criticized as “irrational” the peasant custom of bathing newborns with water with wine: a sign that in the 18th century rural France the custom continued. We now know, for example, that a bath of alcohol hardens the feet,

preparing them to support prolonged activity. We also know that red wine contains tannins, substances of plant origin that are used for tanning leather and other animal skins and make them tough and resistant to extreme temperatures and microbial invasions.

If the baby passed the test, he was taken by his father to the *Lesjé* ("porch") and inspected by a council of wise elders to judge his health and strength, and to determine whether it would be able to withstand a Spartan life. All babies that were not healthy, beautiful and strong were taken to Apothetae ("place of rejection") on the Eastern slope of Mount Taygetos (2407 meters high), from which were thrown into Kaiada (Spartan equivalent to the Roman Tarpeian Rock), a pit located 10 km northwest of Sparta. To this day, Kaiada is a place that has always been surrounded by sinister legends. Not only defective children were thrown into the depths, but also enemies of the state (cowards, traitors, Messenians rebels and suspects) and some prisoners of war. Recently numerous skeletons have been discovered buried there, including women and children.

At other times the defective were delivered to the helots to be raised as slaves, but maybe this should be read that sometimes a caring shepherd (or rather a pastor needed for labor) picked up a baby who had been abandoned to the elements to die, taking him home and rising him as a son.

Let us recall, moreover, that the ancient Germans abandoned defective babies in the woods to be devoured by wolves. In the SS, babies being born deformed, weak or sick were stifled at birth, and subsequently informed the parents that the child was stillborn. According to Plutarch, for the Spartans, "leaving alive a being that was not healthy and strong from the beginning did not benefit either the State or the individual himself." Under this principle there were executed, in an act of true compassion, all babies who were not perfectly healthy. Along with eugenics this was aristogenesis ("best birth" or "birth of the best").

What Nature usually has done in a slow and painful way the

Spartans did so quickly and almost painlessly, saving unnecessary work and suffering. Rather than ignoring the laws of nature—as does the modern techno-industrial society by getting into the red with Nature and the future—, the Spartans rose Nature's laws to the maximum exponent, and created a world where it was impossible to escape from them.

Most Hellenic States (like all Indo-European peoples of antiquity, as well as many non-Indo-European) followed similar eugenic-selection tactics in which it was assumed that the right to life was not for everyone, but that it must be earned proving oneself strong and healthy. This idea comes from the unconscious conviction that the people to which one belongs has internalized a pact with Nature. In the rest of Greece, eugenics was optional and the decision was up to the fathers, so that the babies were selected privately as a domestic policy. In Sparta, on the other hand, the selection was a fully institutionalized state policy. The Spartans saw in these measures a matter of life and death, and survival in terms of community of blood. They assumed these measures with conviction, because in the past the measures had helped them to overcome extremely adverse situations. Its aim was to ensure that only the fit survive and favor evolution, thus maintaining a high biological level for the country and, on this basis, make an improvement on all levels.

Babies who survived the selection were returned to their mothers and incorporated into a male or female brotherhood according to their sex—usually the same one to which belonged his father or mother. Little or nothing is known about these brotherhoods, maybe guilds where children were initiated into religious worship. After being accepted into this fraternity, they went to live with their mothers and nannies, growing up among women up to their seventh year.

During these seven years, the female influence would not soften the children, as these were women who could raise their offspring without softening them. Spartan mothers and nannies were an example of solid maternity: harsh young, severe, and virtuous women imbued with the profound importance and sacredness of their mission. They had been

trained since birth to be real women—to be mothers. Any excessive tenderness or compassion for their child was removed. If the baby was defective he should be killed, and if not, should be tanned as soon as possible to be able to withstand a Spartan life. The first years of the existence of a toddler marked him for the rest of his life and this was understood by the Spartan women, who carefully applied themselves into the task of raising men and women.

Instead of swaddling the babies in bandages, warm clothes, diapers and blankets like larvae, the nursing mothers of Sparta put them on supple, thin and light fabrics; freeing the limbs so they could move them at will and experience the freedom of the body. They knew that babies have a fresher and intact immune system than adults, and if they were taught to endure cold and heat at an early age, not only they would not resent it, but would harden them and make them more immune in the future. Instead of giving in to the cries of babies, Spartan women accustomed them not to complain. Instead of allowing whims for food or overfeeding them with super-purified, ultra-hyper-sterilized and disinfected food that made their immune systems lose attention, they fed them with a coarse and natural diet. Instead of committing the aberration of feeding them with animal, pasteurized, boiled milk stripped of its natural qualities, Spartan women nursed their children themselves, helping to form the maternal bonding.

During the first seven years one more task was ensured so that the infants faced their fears. Spartan mothers and nannies resorted to various methods. Instead of allowing babies to develop fear of the dark, newborns were left in the dark so they could get used to it. Instead of making the babies feel they do not fend for themselves, the were often left alone. They were taught not to cry or complain; to be tough and endure loneliness, although they did remove the objects or impede situations that could make children upset or cry justifiably.

Little Spartans were not exactly pampered like children today are overprotected, overfilled with warm clothes, bulky diapers, hats, scarves, mittens, booties, lace, bells, effeminate and garish designs that make the

poor creature look like a ridiculous, swollen and multicolored ball: restricting his growth, stunting his immunity, isolating him from his environment and preventing feeling it, adapting to it and developing a complicity with it. They were not surrounded by sycophants at all hours hanging on their whining. Nor were subjected to concerts of cries, cuddles and hysterical laughter from unhealthy women: noises that confuse the child and make him feel uncomfortable and ridiculous.

Spartan mothers did not reprimand their children when they showed curiosity, or when they ventured or soiled in the field; or when they went alone or out exploring or playing hurt because that would hinder their initiative. This custom of over-pampering children and reproaching when taking risk is not typical of Indo-European, demanding and manly societies. Spartan children were allowed to penetrate nature, run through the fields and woods; climb trees, rocks, getting dirty, bloodied, being together and fighting and walking totally naked; not letting outdoors a single portion of untanned skin.

All physically and spiritually healthy men felt the call of heroism, war and weapons from an early age: an instinct that the race has injected them into the blood to ensure its defense. Far from encouraging a distaste for violence that is always given to children, the Spartan women encouraged it when possible. Each time the children looked a Spartan soldier it was created around him an aura of mystery and adoration: they admired him and had him as model and example, and wanted to emulate him soon.

As a result of these wise policies Spartan nurses were famous in all Hellas, for their ways produced as mature, tough, disciplined and responsible children that many foreigners rushed to hire their services to raise their own children under Spartans methods. For example, the famous Athenian Alcibiades (450-404 BCE), nephew of Pericles and student of Socrates, was raised by the Spartan nurse Amicla.

THE EDUCATION OF CHILDREN

The discipline of suffering, of great suffering—do you not know that it is this discipline alone which has created every elevation of mankind hitherto?

—Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil

At seven years of age—the age at which the pituitary and pineal glands begin to degenerate—, Spartan children were tougher, stronger, wiser, fiercer and more mature than most adults of today. And even though they were not men, they were already well prepared for the arrival of masculinity. At this age—five according to Plutarch—they began their *Agoge*, which means training or instruction. (It is intriguing how this coincided with the learning process of European medieval chivalry, when at seven children were separated from their families and became apprentices. Seven years later, at the age of fourteen, passed to be squires. And seven years later, at twenty-one, they were knighted.)

A motion process was set related to maternal influence—reminiscence of the time of delivery—, and in a single blow the other, intangible "umbilical cord" was cut, which still subsisted between mother and son. Children were torn, therefore, from their mothers and placed under military tutelage with other children of the same age, under the command of an instructor, the *paidonomos*: a kind of supervisor who was usually an outstanding lad between eighteen and twenty years old who would soon end his own instruction. When he was absent for some reason, any citizen (that is, any Spartan male who had already finished his instruction) could order them whatever, or punish them as he saw fit. Instruction lasted no more and no less than thirteen years, during which children were already educated and disciplined by men, in order to become men.

The *Agoge* is perhaps the most brutal and effective system of physical, psychological and spiritual training ever created. The education that Spartan children received was obviously of paramilitary type, which in some cases was clearly oriented to guerrilla war in the mountains and forests, for the child to fuse with nature and feel like the king predator. For all we know it was a superhuman process, a living hell almost of spiritual and physical alchemy, infinitely harder than any military training of the present because it was far more dangerous, lasting (thirteen years), exhausting, and because the tiniest faults were punished with huge doses of pain—and because the "recruits" were children of seven years.

Immediately after entering the *Agoge*, the first thing done to the kids was shaving their heads. Certainly that was the most convenient for those who were destined to move through dense vegetation, bite the mud and fight each other. But the sacrifice of the hair implied a kind of "mystical death": waived possessions, decorations, individuality and beauty were renounced, even one's own welfare was neglected (the hair is important for physical and spiritual health). The "recruits" were homogenized and given a sense of nakedness, loneliness, helplessness and of a beginning (babies are born bald), a "start from scratch," throwing them sharply to a world of cruelty, pain, resignation and sacrifice.

This is not isolated or arbitrary. The first armies, composed of many men who had to live together in a small space, saw the need to keep the hair short to prevent the spread of lice and disease. Furthermore, a shaved head must have meant something more to them. The Egyptian priests of the highest degree, the Roman legionaries and the Templars also shaved the head as well as, to this day, Buddhist monks and numerous military units. When a group becomes uniform its members will not be differentiated anymore by their "personal" appearances or by their external differentiations, but for the qualities that protrude from scratch on equal footing with their comrades. Paradoxically, standardizing a group is the best method to observe carefully what really

distinguishes individuals.

Children understood what it was suggested: giving up on themselves, or as Goethe said "give up existence in order to exist." Only the one who does not cling pathetically to his life can live as a real man, and only one who does not cling desperately to his ego and his individuality may reach a truly consolidated and distinct character.

After shaving the head, children were organized by *Agelai* (hordes or bands) in paramilitary style. The hardest, more beautiful, fiercest and fanatical children (i.e., the "natural leaders") were made horde chiefs as soon as identified. In the area of doctrine and morals, the first thing was to inculcate the recruits love for their horde: a holy obedience without limits for their instructors and their bosses, and make it clear that the most important thing was to show immense energy and aggressiveness. For his brothers his relations were perpetual rivalry and competition. Those children were treated like men, but those who treated them so would not lose sight they were still children. They were also stamped with the mark that distinguishes every fierce and confident puppy of his abilities: impatience, the desire to demonstrate and be tested, and the desire to be distinguished by his qualities and merits within his pack.

Inherent to the Spartan instruction was the feeling of selection and elitism. Would-be candidates were told they were the best of Spartan childhood, but that they had to prove it, and that not everyone was worthy of becoming a real Spartan. They got into their heads that they were not all equal, and therefore were all different. And if they were different some were better or worse or had different qualities. And, if so, the best should be over the worst, and each placed in its rightful place according to their qualities. This is why an Order was named thus.

Children were taught to use the sword, the spear, the dagger and the shield, and they marched in close formation even in rough terrain, making the movements with precision and perfect timing. A hardening, physical processes prevailed and they were delivered to many physical exercises designed to encourage the development of their strength and

their latent warlike qualities: running, jumping, javelin and disc hurling; dancing, gymnastics, swimming, wrestling, archery, boxing and hunting are some examples.

To promote competitiveness and fighting spirit, and to accustom them to violence and teamwork, hordes of Spartan children were made to compete with each other in a violent ball game which was basically a variant, much freer and brutal, of rugby. The players were called *sfareis* (ball players). We can imagine those little shaven heads delivering each other wild jolts in every possible way, colliding, dodging and trying to fight for coordination, obtaining possession of the ball and taking it to the agreed target, beyond the opponent's territory and over the bodies of the opponent. We almost can, also, hear the thuds, the screams, the coordination signals, the creaking of the elbows, knees, punches, the headers, the tackles and sprains there must have happened in that game that transformed characters and personalities and leaders as a smith.

In the sanctuary of the goddess Artemis took place many melee fighting rituals among the very young Spartans. They were also faced without further ado horde against horde, child against child or all against all, in fierce fights tooth and nail and clean punches to stimulate aggression, competition and an offensive spirit, to develop their sense of mastery in the chaos of struggles and to build hierarchies. It is easy to imagine the chipped teeth, crushed noses and cheekbones, bloody faces and hands, fainting and open heads in those fierce children fights. In addition, instructors were responsible for setting them on so that they measured the forces between them, provided it was only for competition and desire to excel, and when they saw the foaming of hatred to emerge, the fight was stopped. Perhaps it would have been normal that at the end of the fight the opponents would salute or compliment each other, commenting the fight among them, with their peers and with their instructors and trying to learn. In Sparta ruled that ancient cult that we may call "mysteries of the fight."

Besides boxing and wrestling the Spartans also exercised other popular martial art in Greece: the *pankration*. It consisted of a mix of

boxing and wrestling, similar to the modern disciplines of mixed martial arts and vale tudo, but more brutal: participants could incorporate into the bands of their fists the accessories of what they believed was suitable to increase their offensive power: some added pieces of wood, tin foil and even lead plates.

The rules were simple: everything was allowed but biting, poking in the eyes, nose or mouth of the adversary. It was also forbidden to deliberately kill the opponent, but yet many were those who died in this bloody sport. In those combats if you could not proclaim a winner before sunset they resorted to *klimax*, a solution equivalent to tie on penalties in soccer games. By turns, each wrestler had the right to hit the other, without the receiver being allowed to dodge or defend in any way. One who would strike the blow told his opponent what position he should take to receive the attack. The goal was to see who first fell out of combat.

Greek history gives us an example with a bout between such and such Damogenes and Creugas, which reached a "draw," so *klimax* was applied. After drawing lots, the first to hit was Creugas, who asked his opponent to come down the arms, so that he gave him a powerful punch in the face. Damogenes received the tremendous blow with dignity, after which he asked Creugas lift his left arm. Immediately afterwards he inserted his fingers violently under his ribs and tore the bowels out.

The pacifists and progressives of today that praise Greece should know that force, ferocity and violence were worshiped, in addition to wisdom. The Greeks philosophized and were "civilized," yes, but when needed (or just as a hobby) they knew how to be perfect animals. That was their duality—a duality of union, not separation, a duality that sought the perfect integration of mind and body, light in darkness, overcoming their separation.

In all the struggles, battles, competitions and games, the instructors put great attention to distinguish whether each child's screams were of anger, stress or aggression; or of pain and fear in which case they were punished. If a boy complained to his father that he had been hit by

another child, his father gave him a beating for snitching and failing to seek life: “Complaining is of no use at all: it is something that comes from weakness.” And that weakness, in a Spartan, was unacceptable. As said, all citizens had the right to reprimand the children, so that parents had authority over their own children and those of others.

Thus, each parent treated other children as he wanted others treat his, as Xenophon observed. If a child, then, complained to his father that a citizen had given him lashes, the father whipped him even more. In Sparta all was this rotund, blunt, brutal and simple. Indeed, every Spartan child called “father” any adult male, similar to when today we respectfully call “grandfather” an elderly stranger. This habit of calling “father” the grown-ups also was suggested by Plato in his *Republic*, a book that looks like a carbon-copy of Sparta.

It is through the conquests, victories and defeats that the warrior does know himself and the enemy—in the case of Sparta, his fellows. And when a man knows himself, his neighbors and the enemy, wisdom of life is accomplished. Thus he acquires security, prudence, intuition and high confidence. Each Spartan knew his brother because surely he had fought against him, or seen him fight, or had played with him in this rough rugby, or otherwise had suffered together. His whole life was a civil war. They fought against themselves and each other, which did not mean they were no longer together: quite the opposite. This system was a useful outlet for the anger of the race, which was elsewhere tragic in fratricidal conflict, and Sparta almost harmlessly vented such aggression in competitions.

All aspects of the Spartan child’s life were regulated to increase his insensitivity to suffering and aggression. You will be put under a ruthless discipline that requires you to learn to control pain, hunger, thirst, cold, heat, fear, fatigue, disgust, discomfort and lack of sleep. You will be taught survival skills in the field including tracking, guidance, hunting, water extraction and knowledge of edible plants. This will reduce your dependence on civilization and you will be put in touch with the tradition of our hunter-gatherer ancestors of more primitive times.

To achieve all this, the strict and unscrupulous instructors used any means possible to their reach. Wear situations imposed on the young were so intense that they would probably come to a state very close to dementia, with the presence of hallucinations induced by lack of sleep and food. The *mastigophora* (carriers of the whip) were charged to brutally beat and even torture anyone who failed, complained or moaned in pain, so that the tasks came up perfect.

Sometimes children were whipped for no reason, only to harden them, and the Spartan boys would rather die than groan and ask why they were whipped. Spartan philosophy coincided with Nietzsche's when they thought "Blessed is what hardens us!" There even were competitions to see who could hold the most numerous and intense lashes without shouting. This was known as *diamastigosis*.

Sometimes the priestess of Artemis ordered that, in her presence and before an image of the goddess, some children chosen by her to be whipped. If the ceremony-torture was not liked by the priestess she ordered the whipping intensified. These children not only had the obligation not to show pain, but to show joy. The macabre winner of the competition was he who endured longer without complaint. It happened that some died without groaning. It would be said that this is sadomasochistic nonsense, but we cannot judge an ancient custom with modern mentality.

Surely the event inculcated in the victims the notion of sacrifice for the archetype of their homeland (Artemis) and taught them to master suffering with that divinity in mind. Meanwhile, in the rest of Greece athletes underwent voluntarily lashes sessions since it helped tighten their skin and body, and purging the impurities. And Sparta was, undeniably, an athletic state. (He who has been in countries where lashes are still used as punishment will have noticed how much the unfortunate victim transpires, leaving a huge puddle on the floor at the end of execution.)

Nietzsche described the lack of pity towards the promising

candidates: “I spare you not, I love you from my very heart, my brethren in war!” And in words that seem aimed at an instructor, a manufacturer of overmen, he says: “To thee one law—be pure and bright!” Compassion was the worst poison for Sparta, because it preserved and prolonged the life of all weak and dying—whether it was compassion towards themselves, their peers or the enemies. In the *Song of the Lord*, the monumental Indo-Iranian *Bhagavad-Gita*, it is written that “the truly wise mourn neither for the living nor for the dead.”

To suffer and endure pain without complaining was part of the Spartan idiosyncrasy. Boys were proud of the amount of pain they could endure through clenched teeth, and remember that Nietzsche also said that the degree of suffering to which a man is able to tolerate determines his hierarchical place. It is perfectly understandable that this kind of stoicism be interpreted as a masochistic cult of suffering, but we must avoid falling into this error of interpretation. In Sparta the suffering was a means to awaken the fighter’s instincts of a man and to liaise with his body and with Earth itself. Suffering was not meekly accepted with the head down: it was struggled to dominate it, and everything was intended to achieve indifference to suffering—unlike the masochistic cults, as are some variants of modern Christianity or the modern “humanitarian” atheist which produces sentimental and tender beings even for the pain of others.

Loyalty was a very important part of Spartan training. According to Seneca, “Loyalty is the holiest good in the human heart,” and according to Goethe, it “is the effort of a noble soul to match a bigger soul than his.” Loyalty conducted the children towards higher forms and served to make them greater. Spartan boys were inculcated into unswerving loyalty to themselves, their peers and their own Order—i.e. the Spartan state. “My honor is called loyalty,” said the SS, and it could have also been a good motto for the Spartans. For them, loyalty was an asceticism that led them down the road of the right order, morality of honor (*aidos* and *timé*) and compliance with the sacred duty.

As mentioned, obedience was also paramount in the instruction, but

to what extent was such obedience fulfilled? The answer is: it had no bounds. It was put to the test every day. A Spartan boy could be ordered to kill a helot child or provoke a fight with a partner, and it was assumed he would not ask questions but obey quietly and efficiently. He could be given seemingly absurd or unworkable orders to test him, but the important thing was that, without hesitation, he blindly and unquestioned sought the obedience of such order. Obeying was sacred and basic, because the higher knows something the subordinate does not know. In the Army it is said, "He who obeys is never wrong." Young Spartans were constantly tested. If a Spartan boy were told to jump off a cliff, he probably would not have hesitated and would throw himself without blinking and furious conviction.

All this, to profane eyes, all of it may seem exaggerated and outrageous, but the profane still does not understand what it means. When the individual is sure to belong to "something," of being directly in the service of the divine, the orders are not questioned because they come from Above, from somewhere they cannot understand—for now. Serving a similar but higher individual is self-serving, because that control is the community of which the individual is a part. When all the pieces of a gear assume their role with conviction it gives a general sense of calm, confidence, and order that allows men to perform the most dangerous and heroic deeds naturally.

Adolf Hitler said: "the conviction that obeying the voice of duty works for the conservation of the species helps the most serious decisions." If something unjust is ordered it was for the greater good, and in any case questions were never asked. They were obeyed for the sake of obedience, as part of a military-monastic discipline. Obeying an order was obeying to oneself and to the clan, because the chief was an embodiment of the will of the clan. Nietzsche himself advised: "So live your life of obedience and of war!" This magic of loyalty, duty and obedience is what leads the great men to the path of glory.

Instruction was outdoors. The Spartan boys were always immersed in Nature: in nature's sounds, vibrations, landscapes, animals, trees,

changes, cycles and nature's will. They learned to join their homeland; know it, love it and consider it a home. They were forced always to walk barefoot and directly touch the earth: feeling it, understanding it, connecting directly to it as trees. The masseuses know that the feet are the "remote control" of the bodily organs. Having your feet directly in contact with the earth is, undoubtedly, an important massaging effect on the whole body—a destroyed effect today with soles and heels that rumple the natural shape of the foot at work. And not only that: walking bare feet hardened the feet as wood, and eventually the young Spartans moved more lightly on the land than those who had softened their feet with shoes, as feet are designed for that, and if presently this does not work is because we did not develop them, nor tanned them as would be natural.

In winter, Spartans children had to take baths in the icy river Eurotas. They dressed alike in winter than in summer, and slept outdoors on hard reeds torn by the river and cut by hand. The maneuvers and marches they carried out were exhausting, and would kill almost any man of our day—in fact some Spartan boys died of exhaustion. Gradually, the bodies of the boys grew accustomed to cold and heat, developing their own defense mechanisms. Gradually, they became increasingly harder, stronger and more resistant.

As nutrition, they were deliberately assigned an insufficient ration, which included the harsh and bitter Spartan black bread and the famous Spartan *melas zomos* (black soup), which was downright inedible for any non-Spartan. (The bitter black bread was also common in the German military of World War II.) It is said it contained, among other things, blood and pig entrails, salt and vinegar (think of the ingredients of the sausage or black pudding). Probably the ingestion of such concoction was itself a practice of self-control that helped to harden the mouth, stomach and digestive tract. Spartan food, generally, was considered by other Greeks as very strong, if not disgusting. (The development of very strong "delicacies" whose mere ingestion shows courage and resistance is a common military motif. Think of a concoction called "panther's milk"

including condensed milk and gin, popular in the Spanish Legion who sometimes even added gunpowder.)

Moreover, rough and scanty food rations moved the Spartan boys to seek their own food by hunting and gathering or theft, which they themselves cooked. If discovered in the act of stealing food they would expect brutal beating or whipping and deprivation of food for several days, and not for stealing the food which could be stolen from the helots —but for having been caught. Somehow, this reminded the tradition of "right of prey" of the ancient Indo-European hordes: ancient armies usually lacked any campaigns of logistics and survived thanks to taking it from Nature or by plundering their enemies and indigenous populations.

Sparta wanted to teach people to obtain food by their own and getting them used to this; thus adapting them to a lifestyle of uncertainty and deprivation. They lived in a perpetual state of war, and they wanted a right mentalizing. Already Xenophon said, "A hunter, accustomed to fatigue, makes a good soldier and a good citizen." On the other hand, Sparta greatly respected the animals and like the Dorians even retained archaic cult divinities with animal parts (like the Apollo Karneios with ram's horns), which symbolizes the condensation of the totemic qualities associated to the animal in question. Spartan boys who lived in the open should have felt identified with many of the animals around them, forging a certain complicity with them.

We know the story of the Spartan boy who, having captured a fox as food, hid it under his cloak to hide from a group of approaching soldiers. The fox, desperate, began using his teeth and claws to attack the child's body, but he endured it without shouting. When the blood flowed, the fox became more aggressive and began to rip pieces of flesh of the child, literally eating him alive. And the boy endured the pain without screaming. When the fox had come to his gut, gnawing the organs, the small Spartan fell dead and silent in a discrete pool of blood, without leaving out a moan or even having shown signs of pain. It was not fear that made him hide his hunting, for surely that slow and painful death was worse than a lot of lashes. It was his honor, his discipline, the

capacity for suffering, will, strength and toughness—qualities that in his short life he had developed more than any adult in the present. This macabre anecdote, related by Plutarch, is not intended as an apology (after all, Sparta lost in this child an excellent soldier), but an example of Spartan stoicism, which sometimes reached delirious extremes.

With measures of food shortages they wanted to encourage the body, by being deprived from growth in the width, to have more strength and stature. (This produced results, as Xenophon described Spartans as higher than the other Greeks, although heredity also played an important role in this.) They favored the emergence of higher, compact, robust, flexible, slender, hard, agile, strong and athletic bodies; taking a maximized advantage of it with a concentrated, trimmed and fibrous-to-the-end muscles, not prone to injury and with great endurance to pain, fatigue, hunger, thirst, heat, cold, disease, shock, tremendous efforts or prolonged and terrible wounds.

Those were not bodies with overdeveloped muscles, requiring an immense diet and constant and impractical maintenance. Bodies were concentrated, whole and proportionate, designed to survive with the minimum: perfect biological machines which could be studied at a glance in every vein, every tendon, every ligament, every muscle and muscle fiber at the skin's surface. Their strength should have been awesome, otherwise they would not have been able to live, march and fight with the full force of weapons, armor, shield, etc. Plutarch said that the bodies of the Spartans were "hard and dry." Xenophon, on his part, stated that "it is easy to see that these measures could only produce an outstanding race and strength and building. It would be difficult to find a people more healthy and efficient than the Spartans."

This was the most appropriate body for the fighter. Plato in his *Republic*, made clear that the careful diet and regimen of specific exercises that the athletes practiced made them not to surrender when suddenly they were deprived from their routines—during a military campaign for example—, as their bodies were too used to have such amount of nutrients and rely on them. In extreme situations, such bodies

reacted instinctively by reducing muscle mass and producing exhaustion, weakness and malaise. At the Battle of Stalingrad many German fighters inexplicably dropped dead. It was later learned that it was a combination of both hunger, cold and exhaustion. The most affected by this death were precisely the burly and massive men, that is, those requiring more maintenance in terms of food and rest.

Wrestlers of all ages were able to understand this, among them the Roman legionaries who looked for hard, strong and concentrated bodies; and the SS, who exercised without pause, eating a poor diet that included the famous porridge oats: a porridge that so much influenced physiologically the proverbial impassivity of both the English and the Swedes. (We know that oats also influences the tranquility of racehorses, and the athletic diets usually incorporate it.)

As shown by their lifestyle, the Spartans were certainly muscular, but not overdone as far as volume is concerned. They were not massive like the body-builder monsters of today, and to be sure of what we say it is enough to see the nutritional deprivation they suffered, and the exercise regimen they had, so abundant and intense in aerobic efforts. Their level of definition and muscle tone, however, must have been awesome.

Spartan boys were taught to observe, to listen, to learn, to be discreet, not to ask questions and assimilate in silence. They were taught that withdrawal or surrender in battle was a disgrace, that all combat should end in victory or death and that, as Xenophon said, “A death with honor is preferable to a life without honor.” Or in the words of Nietzsche, “To die proudly when it is no longer possible to live proudly.”

The Spartans, like the Celtic Druids and the perfect Cathars and Templars were forbidden to do heavy manual work: their job was war. However, when giving up manual labor they also renounced the fruits of such work: They were imbued with austerity, simplicity and asceticism in all aspects of his life, eliminating anything that might soften or weaken them. Their gestures were measured, reduced, and righteous, and their

manners solemn and respectful. Their houses totally lacked any decoration and had a rustic and rough look, of stone and wood. The aim was to increase the lack of need for each Spartan, his personal self-sufficiency.

In fact, they were not allowed the luxury of the language, so they spoke the right words, dryly, directly, firmly and martially. A Spartan child should remain silent in public, and if you spoke to him he had to respond as soon as possible, with elegance and conciseness, military-style. The Spartan language was like the Spartan village: scanty but of high quality. It was a language of voice, command and obedience. It was infinitely more unpleasant in sound, more mechanical, hard and rough even than the legionnaire Latin or the most martial German. The rough Dorian dialect spoken in Sparta, the "laconic," has become synonymous with dryness and simplicity of speech.

And simplicity of speech is essential for a higher spirituality. Lao Tzu, the legendary messenger of Taoism, said "To speak little is natural." There are numerous and illustrative examples of Spartan brevity. This is a good one: On one occasion in which a Spartan garrison was about to be surrounded and attacked by surprise, the Spartan government simply sent them the message: "Warning." That was enough for men spending a lifetime in military exercising. "To a good listener, few words" (are enough) says Spanish proverb.

The Spartan laconic manners are the direct opposite to the vulgar quackery of today when many opinionated, hysterical voices blend miserably without harmony, destroying silence with nonsensical words: a silence that would be infinitely preferable to that hustle. Speech is far more important than what is accepted today. It condenses communication between people, decisively influencing the way that the individual perceives those around him, particularly his fellow-men. The individual learns to know himself better through knowledge of their fellows, and the concept he has of their peers will have an echo in his own self-esteem. Nietzsche himself, a scholar of philology, attached great importance to speech, dedicating lengthy paragraphs to it.

To learn about politics, solemn manners, respect for the elders and government affairs, Spartan children were taken to the Army guilds or Syssitias (which I will describe later), where young and old men philosophized, talked, and discussed about the affairs of the day. Plutarch said that for the very young attendance at these circles was like a "school of temperance" where they learned to behave like men and "trick" an adversary. They were taught to make fun of others with style, and face teasing. Should it be bad a joke, they should declare themselves offended and the offender immediately ceased. The grown-ups tried to test children to know them better and identify their strengths, and the children should manage to make a good impression and look good during those congregations of attentive veterans, responding with greater ingenuity and promptly to the most twisted, malicious and gimmick questions.

In the Syssitias children learned also the aristocratic and ironic humor typical of the Spartans, learning to joke with elegance and humorously. It is not strange at all that a people like the Spartans, aristocratic, solemn and martial, accorded great importance to humor and laughter—the Spartans had to be especially masters of black humor. Although the helots probably found fascinating the seriousness of the Spartans and would consider them repressed, the Spartans among themselves were like brothers. On order by the very Lycurgus, a statue of the god of laughter decorated the Syssitias. Laughter was indeed of great therapeutic importance. We can imagine the joy, the emotions and laughter that were heard in the sporting competitions, matches and tournaments of Sparta, as in the hour of playing and competing the most solemn and trained men become children.

Education, courtesy and manners were greatly appreciated in Sparta. Why was this so important? Simply because when members of a group follow exemplary behavior, respect prevails; and you want to do well to maintain the honor and gain the respect of your comrades. Further, when members of a group indulge in deplorable attitudes or decadent diversions, respect diminishes, and the prestige within the

group disappears. Why earning the respect of the unworthy through sacrifice if they not even respect the spirit of excellence? The result is plain to see when those renounce to act exemplarily: one is left to soak in the degenerated atmosphere and imitates what he sees. The Spartans sensed this, and established a strict code of conduct and solemn manner at all times to start a virtuous circle.

Spartan instructors often caught the helots and forced them to get drunk; dress ridiculously, dance grotesque dances and sing stupid songs (they were not allowed to recite poems or sing songs of the "free men"). Thus adorned they were presented to the children themselves as an example of the damage caused by alcohol, and the undesirability of drinking too much or drinking at all.

Let us imagine the psychological impact of a proud, hard tanned Spartan boy contemplating an inferior ridiculously dressed, dancing awkwardly and singing incoherently. All this staging served for the Spartan boy to experience a good deal of disgust towards his enemies, who were taught to despise. In Sparta there was no vice of alcoholism, as a drunkard would had been fanatically pulp-beaten to the death as soon as spotted. It was Lycurgus himself who had ordered to weed the grapevines outside Sparta, and overall alcohol was something considered with utmost caution, distrust and control.

The lifestyle of the Spartan children would kill in less than a day the vast majority of adults of today. How did they endure? Simply because they had been bred for it. From an early age they were taught to be tough and strong, tanning in nature and neglecting the comforts of civilization. And the children's bodies and spirits learned quickly and adapted easily to any situation, developing the qualities they needed to survive. Moreover, they were not allowed contact with anything that might soften them in the least, and so grew uncorrupted and uncontaminated.

As they grew, children discipline became tougher: puberty approached. Such transit in a society as close to its tribal roots as the Spartan must necessarily be accompanied by some kind of initiation

ritual, probably in the brotherhoods to which they belonged. It is in adolescence when young people are initiated in their own incipient masculinity, and in Sparta they were prepared so that the advent of the male forces did not catch their innocent instincts by surprise. So, on the fly, and day to day, they were learning to become men without the chaotic physiological and mental imbalances currently rigged at arrival of adolescence.

THE EDUCATION OF ADOLESCENTS

We know with certainty that, at the gates of puberty, there was a brutal initiation ritual of physical and psychological type to be overcome in order to continue with the instruction. During the festival of the goddess Artemis, the altar was filled with tasty cheese. Aspiring lads had to steal as many cheeses as they could, but this must outwit a phalanx of armed lads with whips, instructed to use them unscrupulously in the task of protecting the altar. To achieve their objective, the boys must learn to coordinate and demonstrate a spirit of sacrifice and selflessness. Everyone received terrible wounds, but it was necessary to endure the pain as they stole the pieces. Sometimes a boy died. In Sparta there were many tests of this type, whose goal was to bring applicants to the limit to harden them up, also discarding the weak. Those who, covered in blood, bore the "ceremony" with no moan, cry pain or scream were awarded crowns of leaves and hailed as heroes for their people, acclaimed by their elders, young girls and the younger siblings, who found the triumph inspiring. Thus, the victorious became *eirenes* or *irenes* (ephebes).

From the moment following the festival of Artemis, a transformation operated in the instruction of the boys who had passed the test. They came from the gangs, receiving out a simple *himation* (woolen clothing) each year, being forbidden the *chiton* (common tunic). Discipline became stricter.

According to Xenophon, Lycurgus realized that, from adolescence, self-will is rooted in the mind of the boy. It looms in his conduct a subtle trend of insolence which marks the beginning of a selfish appetite and individualistic pleasure. Also, the stage that separates the fearful and innocent child from the wise veteran is a thin red line of imprudence and recklessness, typical of adolescence and those who, having learned a lot but not enough, tend to overestimate themselves and commit dangerous

blunders. And that is the most difficult step in any learning: when you think you know "enough."

To counter this potential pride, Spartan ephebes had to walk through the streets in silence, with their head bowed and their hands hidden, without looking around but fixing their eyes on the ground, taking a walk of monks, as centuries later would walk the perfect Manichean. Boys who would otherwise be the loudest and annoying were converted into gray and ghostly silhouettes. This, of course, was not permanent but temporary and contributed to strengthen the humility and modesty of the young Spartans; and to raise the pride of those who, after concluding their instruction, were allowed to walk with their heads held high. It also helped in the meantime that the citizens would not feel offended by the presumption of the candidates, since there is nothing to offend more a seasoned veteran than an arrogant and cocky "newbie" too proud of his achievements.

But on the other hand, the ephebes were first taught to read and write, and were taught music, dance, mythology and poetry. And, for the first time since they were seven years old, long hair was permitted: in which care they would rush, gradually getting spotless manes and feel pride of them, since the hair was "the cheapest ornament" and, according to Lycurgus, "adds beauty to a beautiful face, and terror to an ugly face." Wearing long hair was an ancient Greek custom that somehow recalled the barbarian origins of the race. Many have given long hair, especially in the case of women, the importance of signs of fertility: nervous system extensions and tuners of spiritual capacities. Archetypically, it is the manifestation of the spiritual bell that comes from the top head of the consummate practitioner of inner alchemy. On the formation of long hair act factors such as nutrition, health, exposure to sun and air, and exercise. Thus the mane should be something like a banner of individuality, a personal identification sign denoting the health and habits of the individual.

What is clear is that for some young people who had been at age seven with a shaved head, a grown hair should have represented a sign of

psychological improvement, and convey the sense of a new, more spiritual stage, less helpless and raw, less brutal. After the painful stage in which children sacrificed their hair, they had conquered the beauty and individuality allowed to their perfect ancestors. Both the shaved head like the achievement of long hair were for the Spartans two stages of an archetypal transformation process, internal and external.

The most important new material of this period was the music, which was oriented to religious, patriotic and war hymns. The songs and the singing together is something that helps the united cultivation of the spirit and strengthen the cohesion of the collective unconscious. Each alliance of warriors always has had its songs. In Sparta there were numerous choirs, and every Spartan child should learn to sing in a chorus. In many ceremonies three groups were organized: one of old people, other of young males and another for children. When elders began singing "In the past we were young and brave and strong," the young men continued "and so are we now, come and check it out for," and the kids responded "but soon we will be the stronger." A nation that prides itself always seeks that each generation is better than the previous as time goes on, like a wolf pack: the younger vigorous and impulsive generations replace the older in positions through direct action.

Great emphasis was placed in the cultivation of memory, and the young Spartans memorized ballads of the poet Tyrtaeus, who had helped them so much in the second Messenian war. As an example of the poetry of Tyrtaeus, forgive the following snippet:

> *Let's advance by locking a concave wall of shields, marching in rows of Pamphyli, Hylleis, Dymanes [the three originating Dorian tribes], and waving in the murderer hands the spears. Thus entrusting us to the Eternal Gods, without delay we comply with the orders of the captains, and we all right away go to the rude fray, firmly raising in front of those spearmen. Tremendous will be the crash when both armies collide their round shields and resonate when abut each other… Well, it's a beautiful die if you fall into that vanguard like brave warrior*

who fights for his country... with courage fight for the homeland and the children, and die without begrudging now our lives...

Those who dare, in closed row, to fight melee and advance in vanguard in fewer number die, and save those who follow them. Those who are left with nothing tremble without honor... Go in melee combat, with long spear or sword smite and finish with the fierce enemy. Putting foot by foot, squeezing shield to shield, plume with plume and helmet to helmet, chest to chest fight against the other, handling the hilt of the sword or the long spear... Go forward, children of the citizens of Sparta, the city of the brave warriors! With the left hold firm your shield, and the spear brandish boldly, without worrying to save your life: that is not the custom of Sparta. Make the spirit of your heart strong and courageous, and do not fall in love with life when you are fighting men.

The Spartan ephebes assiduously studied Homer, whose many verses could recite. But of course, the military-physical training did not stop ever, and was always the main subject. As they were getting older some boys were placed in front of the gangs of younger children, either as *paidonomos* or *mastigophora*. The desire of the veteran to make the rookie suffer to perfect him and cure him, teaching him everything he had learned—and that occurs in any army—, was taken to squeeze the new generations and to excel the foregoing.

We have seen that all instruction was intended to cultivate Spartan abilities as will to power, decision-making, the pleasure of responsibility, valor, courage, bravery, stoicism, patriotism, the martial, the ability of leadership, sobriety, self-control, asceticism, austerity, sacrifice and suffering, courage, physical and moral toughness, the sense of duty and honor, fortitude, wisdom, psychological and spiritual balance; the quick wit, sharp and cold and chivalry education, character building, solemnity,

respect, brevity, iron discipline, efficiency, holy obedience and aggression. A wide range of important and basic qualities, today endangered. But all these qualities would be useless if they were not used for something; if they had no objective, a single goal. Nietzsche wrote, “It is inexcusable that, having power, you do not want to dominate.”

Any discipline, asceticism, self-control, the terrible pain, the fear, the danger, the risk, rivalry, hunger, thirst, sleepiness, exhaustion, cold, heat, discomfort, the hideous cruelty, the suffering and fighting, the beating, whipping, insults, blood splashing everywhere, the constant omnipresence of deeper death and higher life leading to a prodigious tension of life, were a wonderful and magnificent expression of how a whole lineage wanted to be: furious, and, at all costs, the absolute masters of their own collective will enthroned on Earth and mercilessly crushing any enemy that arose. Are these bad feelings? Or, conversely, are they highest and most admirable sentiments, sacred impulses that prompt to live, to fight, to destroy, to create, to renew and translate into some eternal memory? These were qualities and feelings that Indo-European humanity has lost and must be recovered.

All this is great as it is. Now then, what was the result of these qualities and these feelings? What was the result of such education? What was the result of the discipline of great suffering? The result was a man of superior type, with a cool head and insensitive to pain, suffering and discomfort, who used to think quickly in times of great danger and stress. A soldier well versed in all the arts of war who used to fight to achieve his goals; a martial man bred and trained to rule. A fearless and fearsome man, that despised his own life for the sake of his people; despised more the others, so he was hard and ruthless. A mighty stoic man also despised all material trifles of worldly life, and his only dedication were his brothers in combat, his loyalty to his country, and his devotion to his family and wishes of divinity for his race.

A man accustomed to outdoor life, which forged an unbreakable bond with his land, which was regarded as a sacred legacy, a responsibility. A gymnast with impressive physical form, a true athlete. A

warrior used to earn things by himself. Nothing done to him would break him; he was able to endure the most terrible pains and deepest spiritual tragedies as calmly as accepting the joys and triumphs. After having demonstrated the ability to obey, he earned the right to command.

Think of how Spartan children suffered the pain, fear, stress and exhaustion. What happened when they emerged from childhood? Into what they turned when growing and becoming men? How would the body of an adult Spartan look like? We can only imagine, but at his side the young athletes of the Athenian sculptures may seem harmless angels.

The Spartan body was immediately distinguished for being very willowy, slender, dark-skinned not for race but for exposure to the sun, air, moisture; to dry, fresh and salt water, the skewers of vegetation, to stinging insects, dust, land, rock, snow, rain, hail and, ultimately, all kinds of weather. This would make the Spartan skin so stranded and hard as wood. Second, the relief of his body would be highlighted. The type of physical training had favored the development muscle mass concentration, hardness, strength, extreme flexibility and the "purging" of all grease and impurities. Thus, the Spartan would be fibrous and bulky at once, and would look lean and sharp. Vascular fat and softness would shine by their absence; blood vessels, ligaments, fibers, muscles, nerves and tendons would stand almost grotesquely and ultimately, everything would appear to be a rough, twisted, tense and compact mass of roots, branches, wires, tubes, cutting, marking and stones with the color of the wood.

In addition we can figure out that their body would be entirely crossed by many scars. The marks of the lashes would be remarkable in many areas of the skin, but especially in the back. Each Spartan should be a differential map, with different types of signs of violence. Many would lack teeth, have a broken nose and scars on the skull and face: a legacy of melee combats and brutal ball games. The height of the Spartan, what their contemporaries have told us (remember Xenophon, though he lived in an already decadent stage of Sparta), must be high if we consider the malnutrition undergoing in childhood and puberty. In Thebes

skeletons have been discovered belonging to a Spartan garrison, of which 180 centimeters must be a normal height among them. Spartan's hair was long, usually blond. They were allowed to grow beards and took pride in their care, because for them the beard was a symbol of a free and accomplished man who chooses his life. Their faces with a hard look, a strong expression highlighted by the intensely of the blue eyes bequeathed by their Dorian ancestors.

The animals are remarkable for their hardness, their instinct, their resistance to pain and hunger, bad weather, and for their ferocity. The Spartans, thanks to the energy that only comes with experience, motivation and a fanatical and methodical training, were able to beat them. Through self-sacrifice and the risk posed by blindly lunging the unknown and the extreme, they were able to answer the question of where the limits of man lay, and what man is capable when a supernatural will dwells within and take firm roots throughout his being.

We cannot even imagine how were the men of ancient times, for their ferocity, determination and toughness. Well, of them all, the Spartan was the hardest and well-made, the most perfected and stronger. The instruction of the Spartans was brutal, but in one way or another, instructors have always unconsciously intuited that that is the best way to form good warriors.

On a much smaller scale, modern armies also employ brutality toward the recruits. The insults, shouting, offences, humiliation, beatings and hazing—modern initiations—help the novice to be ashamed of his former self, to get rid of it, forget it and change it to a personality that is coupled with that of his comrades: another piece of the puzzle that will become his unit. Moreover, often they are not called by names, but by nicknames ("war names") or numbers. Exhaustive exercises, inconvenience, discomfort, suffering, fear, stress, disgust, etc., serve to sustain and promote the recruit and his humility and respect before what excels him. Only when the applicant has *delivered himself* as a sacrifice, voluntarily touching bottom in strenuous suffering, he may start from scratch again in a new way, with a transformed personality purged of its

blemishes and tempered in the fire and the hammer of an ideal; firm, fanatic, sublime and sacred. Today only the vaguest trace of all this stoicism has reached us.

Public punishments, extremely difficult testing, the victory of each gang and good sports scores helped to reinforce the prestige of the Spartan community. A community not only has prestige for those who do not belong to it, but its members feel that same prestige internally. This morality, this *esprit de corps*, increased the pride of belonging to such community. The sacrifices that Sparta members underwent made everyone feel pride and honor in their contemplation. Every time a lad calmly endured a whipping session, every time another one beat a sport record, each time that, with his face torn and bleeding hands, the victorious fighter triumphed over himself and over probability, the will of each member of the community was persuaded: “such acts demonstrate the greatness of my community. I am proud to be with these men and will continue perfecting to reach their height.” And pride and elitism swelled as with fire. When called “equals” among each other, they felt mutually proud. And when a weak fell from exhaustion during a march, when another was punished for moaning in a fight or under the lashes, when another fainted of pain, when another did not return from the forest or mountain, when another died in a career or of hunger, the same iron will read these happenings: “Such acts show that not everyone has the honor of belonging to our community, but that it must be won. I want to win this honor and I am on track. And I want the weak to surrender, leave or be removed from our community for the sake of it.” That is, they dismissed those who might besmirch the honor of the word “ equal,” and such removal was a sacrifice that kept alive the flame of pride.

This group is to the amorphous collectivity what the pack is for the flock.

ADULT LIFE

"To breed, to bleed, to lead."

—The law of the English aristocracy of old.

At age twenty, after thirteen years of an atrocious training that tanned their bodies for the rest of their lives, with scarred skin and crossed backs for the whipping, young Spartans reached the critical point in their lives. In case they did not successfully pass the final phase of instruction they became *perioeci* or *perioikoi*. The others were destined for a solemn ceremony in which the diverse military communities called Syssitias (which could be defined as communal meals, guilds or Army clubs), formed to recruit members among the recently promoted. The Syssitias had from fifteen to twenty members. Some had more prestige than others, and they tried to keep up their fame by recruiting the new "promotion." Evaluating a candidate took into account his reputation, his toughness, his skill with weapons, his courage, his audacity, his presence, his fitness and intelligence.

The candidate presented himself in the table of the Syssitia he aspired to join. Syssitia members then deposited small pieces of bread in an urn. The contents of the urn were inspected, and if only one of the pieces had been deliberately flattened by one of the members, the candidate was rejected. Often it was the case that the best young, the most promising and famous, were disputed by several prestigious Syssitias, while the less remarkable were incorporated into the less demanding. In any case, it was rare that a young Spartan was denied entry to any Syssitia. But in the unlikely event of being rejected by all, the young man in question became *hypomeion* (inferior). An outcast who ate alone because of being rejected even by the most mediocre Syssitias implied that the candidate was undesirable for his comrades. He had the

option to clean his honor through courageous deeds, or to fall in battle.

Joining a Syssitia meant that the member happened to be accepted by their peers as a Spartiate with all obligations, but would not acquire full citizenship rights until age thirty. That is, after thirteen years of training and after entering the Army, there were still ten years of "probation" which coincided with the period of greatest biological flourishing.

Note that the criterion of the age of majority at twenty, and that other issues such as purity in matters of sex was shared by the Germans. Julius Caesar said about them in *Gallic Wars*:

> *From childhood they devote themselves to fatigue and hardships. Those who have remained chaste for the longest time receive the greatest commendation among their people. They think that, by doing this, growth is promoted... And to have had knowledge [sex] of a woman before the twentieth year they reckon among the most disgraceful acts. However, there is some hypocrisy in them in body issues, since men and women bath naked together in rivers and in their dresses so much of the body remains naked.*

What is said here is exactly valid also for the Spartans who, as Indo-Europeans of tradition, drank from the same sources as the Germans. From an early age there was suffering, stimuli, glory and camaraderie to clear the path to manhood when it arrived, following *aidos* morale ("modesty," "decency"). And even when maturity had arrived sexual abstinence was maintained until the young man was spiritually able to take control of his instincts. The end of all the preparatory stages was to accumulate energy and testosterone to grow; to complete without interference the biological alchemy that takes place in the male body during this stage.

In each Syssitia the member was required to provide food in the

form of barley, wine, cheese, flour, figs, quinces and other fruits. If the member failed repeatedly to provide rations he was expelled from the Syssitia and degraded to *perioeci* or *hypomeion*. It was easy to get rations: they came from the parcel of land (*kleros*) that each soldier was assigned, a plot of land that he almost never saw; worked by helots, and managed by his wife. Throughout all the state Sparta had 10,000 parcels of which about 6,000 were in the territories of conquered Messenia.

At age of twenty, therefore, after having entered these military Syssitias, young soldiers were incorporated in the Spartan phalanx. They would be part of it, if they survived, until their sixty years: gradually ascending the ladder of command, merit and experience. They would spend most of their lives committed to the Army, although their operational period would be ten years, between twenty and thirty. From thirty they were allowed to live at home with their wives and perform public tasks to become citizens and enter the Assembly. Until then, they lived in military barracks and made all their meals with their Syssitia fellows. When they had free time they supervised the instruction of the younger generation and tried to teach them useful things, encourage them for the fights to discover the capabilities of each child, and maybe even learn something from them occasionally. Other times they were given to the company of their elders to learn from them something useful, or to hear their stories and their reflections.

The Syssitias were very important institutions in Sparta, for when the men were not waging war, they were training for warring better. And if not, they socialized with their comrades in these “clubs.” Only as a fourth place were family relationships ranked. The Syssitias were presided over by a statue of the god of laughter, introduced by the same Lycurgus. There the Spartan developed his humor and his sharp and terse conversations. There, men of every age and condition mingled. It was impossible, thus, the emergence of the “generation gap” since all generations shared their experiences and concerns. There were no distinctions of wealth, only of valor itself, and the experience was taken into account when assessing a man. They were united by the fact of

having passed the instruction, having had similar hardships, and being male Spartans. They were proud to be joining the phalanx alongside those who had amply demonstrated their toughness, bravery and righteousness. That was what made them brothers.

It was of immense importance that each Spartan contracted marriage and had many children, and in fact they imposed fines and penalties for late marriage and there was even a tax of bachelorhood. As for celibacy, it was a clear crime in Sparta, and it was not even conceived. They were occasions of groups of girls beating up wandering bachelor men of already certain age. Other witnesses recounted how in winter single males and females and even couples without children were stripped naked and forced to march through the city center singing a song about how fair it was their humiliation, because they had failed to fulfill the law.

Being single at a certain age—around twenty-five—was a disgrace comparable to cowardice in battle, since Spartan femininity was completely healthy, pure and trained to provide exemplary wives and proud mothers. These women were perfectly at the height of a Spartan. Under the natural viewpoint prevailed in Sparta, it was a crime that existing perfectly healthy girls a lad deprived the race of offspring. Plutarch tells a revealing anecdote about it. A famous and respected Spartan general called Dercyllidas came at a meeting and one of the young Spartans refused to relinquish his seat, as he should, “because you do not leave a child that would relinquish it [the seat] to me.” The young man was not reprimanded or punished, because he was right.

High rates of birth were favored through incentives and awards to large families, plus the releasing of communal pay of those who had more than four healthy children. This, along with the practical obligation to marry, was aimed at encouraging the multiplication of the race.

The same occurred in the Nazi SS, where we can see how they tried by all means to multiply the progeny. Like the Spartans, the SS favored the high birth rate among its members, punishing those who did not

reproduce. Some single officers were even threatened with expulsion, and were given a year to get married. In other cases, when a fighter of the SS had lost all his brothers, he was often allowed a leave period to ensure a large family before returning to the front. The alleged reason was that the State was interested that his blood would not be lost for the future. This policy healed the previous genocide of countless chaste, good men in medieval Europe: particularly the members of military-religious orders such as the Templars. Both the Spartans and the SS were a *sippenorden*, i.e., a racial order or religious-military order: racial clans who wanted to be eternal on earth; materially eternalized through their children and their descendants.

We gather, in any case, that the Spartan population growth should not be as great as many imagine, because despite its abundant children many died in eugenic selection and childrearing, and others during the instruction or infectious diseases expected by natural selection.

With respect to the superfluous, the Spartan philosophy was: “If it is not essential, it is a hindrance.” Everything that was not necessary for survival was banished with disdain. The jewels, ornaments, extravagant designs, garish colors and other burdens and distractions, were excised from Sparta. The luxury and decor were nonexistent. To the Spartans it was strictly forbidden to trade with gold or silver, and the possession of it was severely punished, as well as the use as ornaments or jewelry.

The Spartan state itself refused to make coins of any kind. As tool for exchange of goods (that is, money), iron bars were used (Laconia had important iron mines). They were so big, ugly and heavy that few people wanted to accumulate them, hide them, or possess them (we could add also to count them, pet them and watch over them with curiosity as did the greedy with the beautiful gold coins). Moreover, the bars were not accepted outside of Sparta. Plutarch says, referring to the Spartan “currency” that “no one could buy with it foreign effects, nor it entered the trading ports, nor reached Laconia any wordy sophist, greeter or swindler, or man of bad traffic of women or artificer of gold and silver” (*Life of Lycurgus*, IX).

In short, it was not easy to fiddle with this money; nor deal, bribe, steal, smuggle or enter into contracts with foreigners; nor could vices appear such as gambling or prostitution. The greedy was exposed, as it needed a barn to store his entire fortune. And if someone happened to cut the handle bars and hide them, the manufacturers of these—when it was red-hot—dipped in vinegar, which made it lose ductility and could not be worked or molded.

I cannot resist noting that the use of iron as money in Sparta is archetypal and symbolic. While other states abandoned themselves in the gold, Sparta adopted the rough metal. While other, softer states often aimed at recreating the golden age in its nostalgic narcosis, Sparta adapted itself to the hard times of the Iron Age. Sparta, really, was a true daughter of the Iron Age: a jewel among ferments of decomposition of the autumn evening light. It was in Sparta where the understanding of a type of superior wisdom was kept: not the golden and regressed and senile wisdom, but the new wisdom of iron.

Thanks to all the measures of sobriety, coarseness and austerity, Sparta escaped the cosmopolitan, false soothsayers, jewelers, merchants, liars, drug dealers and other eastern specimens, who refused to go through a state where there was virtually no money; the little that existed was an unwanted burden to his owner, and its inhabitants were all proud, xenophobic and incorruptible soldiers.

Plutarch said that for the Spartans “money lacked interest or appreciation.” Both the contempt of material and fleeting pleasures like money itself points to an ascetic, anti-materialist and anti-hedonistic society. Nietzsche repeated, like other Eastern teachers: “Whoever has little is in no danger that he will be owned. Praise that simple poverty!” The Spartans were taught that civilization itself, with its luxuries, comforts, riches, its effeminacy, lust and complacency, was a dilutional factor: something countless times certificated by Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, who admired the ascendant and uncontaminated world of the barbarians, of which the Spartans were the ultimate, more refined and perfected expression. Sparta did not have to be contaminated by this

dangerous Eastern influence, first because it had the abundant labor of the helots and because, for racial reasons, it did not allow immigration and the slave trade. Sparta saw itself as the repository of ancient Greek, and especially, Dorian customs and thus they also saw the other people of Hellas—except Athens.

From age twenty-five Spartans were allowed to eat with their wives, occasionally. From age thirty (the age at which the growth hormone decays) Spartan discipline relaxed, especially on the "communal" aspects. The Spartan left, then, the military barracks and went to live in his home with his wife and children (though by now probably some of his sons would be suffering under state supervision and instruction). They joined the Assembly, a popular organism to be discussed later, performing any duty of the state, a responsibility assigned to him: like army commanders, *harmost* (military governors) among the *perioeci*, envoys from Sparta abroad, etc. They passed, then, to be citizens with all the rights and all the duties.

At sixty years old, if he came to that age and if he had the honor of being selected, the Spartan became part of the Senate. Being senator was for life. Spartan old age enjoyed immeasurable respect from the countrymen, who unconditionally revered their elders as repositories of wisdom and experience, and as a link connecting the past with the present, just as the youth is the bond that unites the present with the future. The Spartans revered the elders even if they were not Spartans. As an example of the latter we have a story that happened in the theater of Athens while some Spartan ambassadors were inside. An old man entered the theater and no Athenian rose to cede the seat, acting as if they didn't know. However, upon arrival at their place of honor all the Spartan ambassadors rose in unison to cede the place. And then the Athenian audience applauded the noble gesture. "All Greeks know good manners," said one of the ambassadors, "but only the Spartans behave in accordance with them" (*Life of Lycurgus*, IX).

WOMEN AND MARRIAGE

"Man shall be trained for war, and woman for the recreation of the warrior: all else is folly."

—Nietzsche

So far we have examined in detail the Spartan man. It is time to consider the woman and to direct our attention towards her. The Spartans were perhaps the clearest representation of women of honor in the Iron Age, raised under a system that brought out their best qualities. But is it a paradox that, under a resounding patriarchy, women might enjoy broad freedoms? Is it nonsense that in a military where women should have nothing to do, they had more rights than women in any other Greek state? The German ideologue Alfred Rosenberg wrote:

Sparta offered the example of a well disciplined state, and was devoid of any female influence. The kings and the ephors formed the absolute power, the essence of which was the maintenance and expansion of this power through the increase of the Dorian upper stratum with its disciplined outlook.

The Indo-Europeans were strongly patriarchal nations, whose most representative word was precisely "fatherland," in Latin *patria* (father). In Germanic languages—German *Vaterland* and *fatherland* in English—the words mean "land of the fathers." Sparta itself was patriarchal to the core, but as we shall see, the Spartans were not in any way unfair or oppressive to their wives. They enjoyed an impossible freedom in the

effeminate societies where everything is focused on materialism and enjoyment of earthly, temporary pleasures, when the woman becomes an *hetaerae*: a passive object of enjoyment and distorted worship.

Sparta, a state so hard and so manly, was the fairest of Hellas in everything concerning their women, and not for mollycoddling, spoiling or flattering them. Sparta was the only Greek state which instituted a policy of female education, outside the knowledge of the home and children that every woman should own. Sparta was also the state with the highest literacy rate of all Hellas, because Spartan girls were taught to read like their brothers, unlike the rest of Greece where women were illiterate.

In the rest of Greece, sometimes, newborn girls (remember the myth of Atalanta), even if they were perfectly healthy (just like in China today) were exposed to death. Many parents almost considered a disgrace the birth of a girl, and finally all that was achieved was to produce an imbalance in the demographic distribution of the sexes.

But Sparta had more women than men, because their exposure of girls was not as severe; because girls did not pass the brutalities of male instruction, because they did not fall in battle, and because men were often on campaign. Spartans who felt at home should, therefore, always thought in terms of mothers, sisters, wives and daughters: the Homeland, the sacred ideal, had a female character; and protecting it amounted to protect their women. Men did not protect themselves: they were the remote shell of the heart, the sacred heart, and sacrificed themselves in honor of that heart. In Sparta more than anywhere else, females made up the inner circle, while males represented the protective outer wall.

Spartan girls received food in the same amount and quality of their brothers, which did not happen in the democratic states of Greece, where the best food pieces were for boys. Spartan girls were placed under an education system similar to the boys that favored their skills of strength, health, agility and toughness in outdoor classes, but trained by women.

And they were not educated in that blind fanaticism inculcated to excel, sacrifice and desire—that feeling that among boys brushed the desire for self-destruction. For girls, on the other hand, the emphasis was put in the domain and control of emotions and feelings and the cultivation of the maternal instinct. It favored that youths of both sexes trained athletically together, as it was expected that the lads would encourage the fair sex to excel in physical exertion.

The hardness, severity and discipline of female education were, in any case, much lower than those of the Agoge, and there was much less emphasis on the domain of the suffering and pain as well as aggression. Punishment for Spartan girls was not even remotely as cruel as the punishment for boys, nor were torn out from their family homes at seven. After seeing the almost supernatural prowess that meant male instruction, the education of girls, despite being exemplary, is not impressive.

But why was all this about, apart from the fact that all men were active in the military and therefore needed more self-control and discipline? Simply put, the man is a ticking time bomb. In his insides it ferments and burns all kinds of energies and essences that, if not channeled, are negative when poured out as these forces come from the "dark side" which first inclination is chaos and destruction. The aggressiveness of man, his instinct to kill, his tendency to subdue others, his sexual boost, greatest strength, courage, power, will, strength and toughness, make that he has to be subjected to a special discipline that cultivates and channels those energies in order to achieve great things, especially when it comes to young healthy men with powerful, natural instincts—under penalty of which his spirits suffer a huge risk.

Asceticism itself (as sacrifice) is much more typical of man than woman. In fact, the Indo-European woman was never subjected to disciplinary systems as severe as those of the ancient armies. She was considered by the men of old as a more "magical" creature because she was not hindered by the roars of the beast within. For all these reasons, it was fair that the male education was more severe and rigorous than the

female: that is how you train the beast. “It is better to educate men,” Nietzsche put in the words of a wise man who suggested disciplining women.

The main thing in the female formation was physical and a “socialist” education to devote their lives to their country—like men, only that in their case the duty was not shedding her blood on the battlefield, but to keep alive the home, providing a strong and healthy offspring to her race, and raise them with wisdom and care. Giving birth is the fruit of the female instinct that renews the race: that was the mission inculcated in the girls of Sparta.

Spartan women ran, boxed and wrestled in addition of using javelin and disc. They swam, did gymnastics and danced. Although they did participate in sport tournaments, women were barred from the Olympics because of the rejection of the other Hellenic peoples, infected with the mentality whereby a “lady” should rot within four walls. We see that, while Greek sculptures represent well the ideal of male beauty (think of the *Discobolus* by Myron), they did not in the least approach the ideal of Aryan female beauty: all women in female statues represented amorphous, not very natural, non-athletic bodies albeit with perfect facial features. If the Spartans had left sculptures of women, they would have represented better the ideal of beauty because they, unlike the other Greeks, had a clearly defined feminine ideal: it was clear what a woman had to be.

As for female austerity, it was pronounced (though not as much as the one that men practiced), especially compared with the behavior of the other Greek women, so fond of the colors, superficiality, decorations, objects, and with a hint of “consumerism” typical of civilized societies. Spartan women did not even know the extravagant hairstyles from the East and they wore, as a sign of their discipline, their hair up with simplicity: probably the most practical for a life of intense sports and activity. Also, all kinds of makeup, decorations, jewelry and perfumes were unknown and unnecessary for Spartan women, which proudly banished all that southern paraphernalia. Seneca said that “virtue does

not need ornaments; it has in itself its highest ornaments."

One purpose of raising healthy and agile women was that Spartan babies, growing within solid bodies, were born as promising products. According to Plutarch, Lycurgus "made the maidens exercise their bodies in running, wrestling, casting the discus, and hurling the javelin, in order that the fruit of their wombs might have vigorous root in vigorous bodies and come to better maturity, and that they themselves might come with vigour to the fullness of their times, and struggle successfully and easily with the pangs of child-birth" (*Life of Lycurgus*, XIV).

Spartan women were prepared, since childhood, to childbirth and to the stage where they would be mothers, teaching them the right way to raise the little one to become a true Spartan. During this training, the Spartan women were often babysitters, acquiring experience for times when they would receive the initiation of motherhood. They married from age twenty, and did not marry men who surpassed them greatly in age (as in the rest of Greece), but with men their age or five years older or younger at most. Age difference within the members of a marriage was poorly viewed, as it sabotaged the duration of the couple's fertile phase. The aberration of marrying girls of fifteen with men of thirty was not even remotely allowed, an aberration that did happen in other Hellenic states where parents came to force unions whose age difference was of a generation.

Nor was allowed in Sparta another abomination, which consisted of marring girls with their own uncles or cousins to keep inherited wealth within the family: an altogether oriental, anti-Indo-European and unnatural mentality. Other practices, such as prostitution or rape, were not even conceived. Or adultery. One Geradas, a Spartan of very ancient type, who, on being asked by a stranger what the punishment for adulterers was among them, answered: "Stranger, there is no adulterer among us." "Suppose, then," replied the stranger, "there should be one." "A bull," said Geradas, "would be his forfeit, a bull so large that it could stretch over Mount Taygetus and drink from the river Eurotas." Then the stranger was astonished and said: "But how could there be a bull so

large?" To which Geradas replied, with a smile: "But how could there be an adulterer in Sparta?"

Such, then, are the accounts we find of their marriages.

In other Greek states, male nudity was common in religious and sport activities, and this was a sign of their arrogance and pride. Female nudity, however, was banned as the very presence of women in such acts. But in the processions, religious ceremonies, parties and sport activities of Sparta, girls were as naked as the young. Every year during the Gymnopaedia, which lasted ten days, the Spartan youth of both sexes competed in sports tournaments and danced naked. (This was another suggestion of Plato in his *Republic* as well as one of the observations made by Caesar on the Germans.) It was felt that, attending sporting events, the young Spartan would be able to select a well-built husband.

Today nudist activities of this type would be ridiculous because people's nudity is shameful; modern bodies are flabby and lack normal forms. The modern individual tends to see an athletic body as an outstanding body, when an athletic body is a normal and natural body; it is the rest, non-exercised types which are not normal. Recall Nietzsche's reflection: "A naked man is generally regarded as a shameful spectacle." However, at that time, witnessing such a display of health, agility, strength, beauty, muscle and good constitutions should inspire genuine respect and pride of race. The Hellenes of the democratic states argued at the time that the presence of female nudity could cause leering looks, but the fact is that the Spartans took it all with ease and pagan nonchalance. Moreover, young Spartan women that identified an awestruck voyeur used a clever string of jokes that made him a fool in front of the entire stadium, full of solemn authorities and attentive people.

In some ceremonies, the girls sang about boys who had done great deeds, or dishonored that had led to bad. They were, in some way, the demanding voice of the Spartan collective unconscious, which ensures the courage and conduct of men. Not only in the songs appeared the pouring of their opinions, but in public life: they did not overlook a single

one; they were not gentle, but were always criticizing or praising the brave and coward. For men of honor, opinions on the value and manhood were more important if they came from female voices worthy of respect: the criticisms were sharper and praises more restorative. According to Plutarch, the Spartan woman "engendered in young people a laudable ambition and emulation." That is why relationships with women not softened them, but hardened them even more, as they preferred to be brave and conquer their worship.

And what was the result of the patriarchal education on the young girls? It was a caste of women on the verge of perfection: severe, discreet and proud. Spartan femininity took the appearance of young athletic, happy and free, yet serious and somber. They were, as the Valkyries, perfect companion of the warriors. Trophy-women insofar as they aspired for the best man, but physically active and bold; very far, then, from the ideal of "woman-object."

In all Hellas, Spartan women were known for their great beauty and respected for their serenity and maturity. The poet Alcman of Sparta (7th century BCE) dedicated a poem to a woman champion competing in chariot races, praising her for her "golden hair and silver face." Two centuries later, another poet, Bacchylides, wrote about the "blonde Lacedaemonian," describing her "golden hair." Given that the dyes in Sparta were banned, we can deduce that racism and the Apartheid instinct of the Spartans with respect to aboriginal Greeks was strong enough so that, no more and no less than seven centuries after the Dorian invasion, blond hair still predominated among the citizenry of the country.

In a comedy called *Lysistrata*, written by the Athenian playwright Aristophanes (444-385 BCE), there is a scene where a crowd of admiring Athenian women surround a young Spartan named Lampito. "What a splendid creature!" they said. "What a skin, so healthy, what a body, so firm!" Another added: "I've never a chest like that." Homer called Sparta *Kalligynaika*, meaning "land of beautiful women." On the other hand, do not forget that the legendary Helen of Troy, the most beautiful woman in

the world, was originally Helen of Sparta: an ideal that was stolen by the East and that not only Sparta, but the whole Greece recovered through fighting and conquest.[1]

Spartan women were superior in all respects to the other women of their time and, of course, today's women. Even in physical virtues, courage and toughness they would outstrip most modern men. Their severity was the best company to their husbands and the best raising for their children, and she demanded the greatest sacrifices. An anecdote recounts how a Spartan mother killed his own son when she saw he was the sole survivor of the battle and that returned home with a back injury, that is, he had fled rather than fulfill his sacred duty: immolation. Another Spartan mother, seeing her son fled the combat, lifted her robe and asked in the most merciless crudeness if his intention was to, terrified, return from where he came. While other mothers would have said "poor thing!" and stretched their arms open, Spartan mothers did not forgive.

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[1] *The very image of Helen of Sparta has to be purified. Far from the common vision that Hollywood has shown us, her spirit became disordered by the outburst of Aphrodite. Helen, the highest ideal of Hellenic beauty and femininity, was kidnapped by the East, hence the remarkable swat of the Greeks. Upon her arrival in Troy, Helen recovered memory, recalled she was the queen of Sparta, was married to King Menelaus, and they had two daughters; and bitterly regretted and wept for her mistake.*

Helen cursed her luck and Aphrodite by her deception, she considered herself captive despite being treated like a princess, and despised her "husband" Paris (as is evident when she contemptuously rejects him after having behaved like a coward before Menelaus, for whom she reserved her admiration). Lamenting her fate, she wished to be recovered by her lawful husband, as attested by the scene where she has her window in form of open arms as to communicate the permanence of her love. Once she was recovered for Greece, Helen returned to the Spartan throne with honors, serving as queen again, as seen in the Odyssey when Telemachus, son of Odysseus, goes to Sparta to inquire about the fate of his father. It is then that Penelope, wife of Odysseus and mother of Telemachus, laments that her son goes to Sparta, "the land of beautiful women."

Tacitus wrote that the mothers and wives of the Germans (whose mentality was not too different from the Spartan) used to count the scars of their warriors, and that they even required them to return with wounds to show their readiness of sacrifice for them. The Spartans believed that in their wives lived a divine gift, and it was not to be the women who would convince them otherwise, so these women sought to maintain the high standard of the devotion their men professed.

Furthermore, women were convinced that in their men lived the nobility, courage, honesty, power and righteousness typically of the male, along with the notion of duty, honor and the willingness to sacrifice; and men also sought to keep up with such an ideal. Again, we find that the ancient woman did not soften the man, but helped to improve and perfect him because the man felt the need to maintain the integrity before such women; so women remained alert and they did the same with them, having in their minds that they themselves were ideals for which their men were willing to sacrifice themselves. Thus, a virtuous circle was created. The woman was a motif not to give up the fight, but precisely a reason to fight with even more fanaticism.

Other Greeks were outraged because the Spartan women were not afraid to speak in public; because they had opinions and, what is more, their husbands listened. (The same indignation the Romans experienced about the greater freedom of Germanic women.) Moreover, since their men were in constant military camp life, Spartan women, like the Vikings, were responsible for the farm and home. They managed the home resources, economy and self-sufficiency of the family, so that the Spartans relied on their wives to provide the stipulated food rations for their Syssitias. Spartan women (again, like Germanic women) could inherit property and pass it, unlike the other Greek women. All this female domestic administration was, as we see, similar in Germanic law, where women boasted the home-key as a sign of sovereignty over the holy and impregnable family house, and of faithfulness to the breadwinner. Home is the smallest temple that may have the smallest unit of blood, the cell on which the whole race is based: the family. And

the bearer of the key had to be forcibly the mother.

A society at war is doomed if the home, if the female rear, is not with the male vanguard. All the sacrifices of the warriors are just a glorious waste, aimless and meaningless if in the country no women are willing to keep the home running, providing support and spiritual encouragement to the men in the field and, ultimately, giving birth to new warriors. A soldier far from home, without country, ideal and a feminine image of reference—a model of perfection, an axis of divinity—immediately degenerates into a villain without honor. Conversely, if he is able to internalize an inner mystique and a feminine symbolism that balances the brutality he witness day after day, his spirit will be strengthened and his character ennoble. Sparta had no problems in this regard; Spartan women were the perfect counterpart of a good warrior.

Even marriage was tinged with violence. During the ceremony, the man, armed and naked, grabbed her arm firmly and brought the girl "by force" as she lowered her head. (According to Nietzsche, "The distinctive character of a man is will; and in a woman, submission." In Spartan marriage this was truer than anywhere else.) This should not be interpreted in a literal sense of rapture, but in a metaphorical sense and ritual: a staging of Indo-European mythologies are numerous with references of robbery, kidnapping—and the subsequent liberation—of something holy that is necessary to win, earn the right to own it. The fire from the gods, the golden fleece, the apples of the Hesperides, the grail of Celtic and Germanic traditions and the sleeping Valkyrie are examples of such sacred images. Cherished ideals not to be delivered free but conquered by force and courage after overcoming difficult obstacles, and thus ensured that only the most courageous were able to snatch it and own it, while the weak and timid were disqualified in the fight.

On the other hand, can we not find a similarity between the Spartan marriage ritual and the Indo-Iranian *sveyamvara* marriage by abduction allowed to warriors, and in the case of the Sabine abducted by Latins in the origins of Rome, and the same type of marriage allowed to the old Cossacks? In the Indo-Aryan writing, the *Mahabharata*, we read how the

hero Arjuna abducted Subhadra "as do the warriors," marrying her. Again, it was not a literal rapture but rather the conquest of the sacred through respect and strength what rendered the sacred fall before the hero.

In Spartan marriage, then, we see how the Spartan woman was elevated to the status of a divine ideal and not given by her parents to a man chosen by them (as in other rituals of marriage, which makes the bride an object of barter), but the brave man had to earn her. In fact, in Sparta it was not allowed that parents had anything to do with the marital affairs of their offspring; it was the couple that decided their marriage, allowing that preferences and the healthy instincts of the youths would be unhindered—making it clear that to possess a woman of the category of the Spartan it was not enough wealth, parental consent, marriage arrangements, dialectics, seduction or false words. It was necessary to make an overwhelming impression; be robust and noble and genetically worthy.

Also, the Spartan marriage ceremony—dark and almost sinister in its direct crudeness—is the height of the patriarchal warrior society, and one of the most eloquent expressions of patriarchy that governed in Sparta. Lycurgus sought to establish military paranoia and a perpetual environment of war even in marriage. Just as children had to procure their food by hunting and gathering and rapine and pretending to be in the enemy zone, an adult man should also win his chosen one by pretending to be into fringe, hostile territory—"abducting her" in remembrance of a hard and dangerous time that was not kind for romance and lovers. This again made evident how little parents were involved in a plot like this: in ancient times, if they refused to consent to the marriage, the young man performed a daring raid and, with the complicity of his fiancée, "abducted her."

With the Spartan marriage system it was also subtly implied that, as Nature teaches, not everyone was entitled to a female. To be eligible for this right it was necessary for a man to pass a test: eugenics, child rearing, education, entry into the Army Syssitias and the mutual fidelity

of a young female belonging to the same call-up year, which in turn he gained through observation and knowledge at sporting events, popular and religious, and a long loving friendship whose latent purpose should remain hidden from the rest of society. Throughout all these phases the man conquered his beloved girl. The unconquered woman had to prove nothing. She chose her fiancé and had the say as to accept her future husband. Ultimately, it was she who willingly indulged in complicity, leaving herself to be ritually "kidnapped" by the man of her choice.

After the ritual, the bride was taken to the house of her in-laws. There they shaved her head and made her wore clothing like a man. Then she was left in a dark room, waiting for the arrival of the groom. All this is extremely difficult to understand for a modern Western mind and it is not from this point of view we should try to understand it, but putting us at the time and bearing in mind that both Spartan man and woman belonged to an Order.

This last—totally sordid—phase served to impress upon the newlyweds the notion that the secrecy and discretion of their relationship was not over, and that they had not yet earned the right to enjoy a normal marriage. For the woman it implied initiation, sacrifice and a new stage. She was stripped from her seduction skills and her awareness of being attractive. For the man, it was beneficial to make him appreciate what really mattered of his wife: not clothes, hair or ornaments but her body; her face and character.

Consuming an act in these gloomy conditions and absolutely hostile to romance and sexual arousal was for both the man and the woman the least imaginable stimulating, so that gradually they became accustomed to the physical sensations arising from the sexual act, but without the additional psychological stimuli such as a more feminine look in the woman and a gentler environment—stimuli that tend to boycott male stamina, moving him to abandon himself to pleasure and rest on his laurels. Therefore, this staging was not much inspiring sexually in short term, but instead was very stimulating in long-term in a subtle way: slowly, it was blown into the hearts of the lovers the longing for that

which was not still allowed.

So, by the time a woman had re-grown abundant hair, and the pseudo-clandestineness of the relationship was dissipated over time, both male and female were well experienced adults who knew what they wanted and, despite it, had not suffered any loss in sexual desire but rather were more than ever prepared to appreciate and enjoy what meant a free physical relationship.

Lycurgus established that a man should be ashamed to be seen with his wife in loving attitudes so that the meeting took place in private and with greater intimacy and passion, and that the surrounding secrecy and hostility favored the magic of the union: the feeling of complicity and the true romance, which always has to have some secrets. (Plato said that holding hands and fondling should be the maximum carnal love shown in public.) The objective of this measure, too, was to promote mutual thirst for true knowledge, fascination, mystery, magic: the sacred short-circuit between man and woman, and—let's say it—the curiosity of the forbidden, so that their relationship had no public at all, but a private matter, and to encourage that a man and a woman would not get tired of one another. The Spartan couple should have, then, a powerful sexuality that oozed from healthy bodies and pure spirits, resulting in a clean eroticism and a positive lust necessary for the preservation of the race. In the words of Xenophon:

> *He [Lycurgus] noticed, too, that, during the time immediately succeeding marriage, it was usual elsewhere for the husband to have unlimited intercourse with his wife. The rule that he adopted was the opposite of this: for he laid it down that the husband should be ashamed to be seen entering his wife's room or leaving it. With this restriction on intercourse the desire of the one for the other must necessarily be increased, and their offspring was bound to be more vigorous than if they were surfeited with one another [Constitution of the Lacedaemonians, 1].*

How, then, did the Spartans manage to be with their wives? In the Syssitias, a man stood quietly and left the room, ensuring that nobody saw him (at night it was forbidden to walk with a lighting of any kind, to promote the ability to move in the dark without fear and safely). He entered his home, where he found his wife and where happened what had to happen. The man then returned to the Syssitia with his comrades in arms, wrapped in a secrecy that almost touched the squalor. Nobody noticed anything. The sexuality of the couple was strictly private, even furtive and pseudo-clandestine so that no person would interfere with it and make the relationship stronger and, to quote again Plutarch, that their minds were always "recent in love, to leave in both the flame of desire and complacency."

Were Spartan relations normal, natural or desirable? No. Quite the opposite. They created a most unpleasant weather, far from corresponding to some sort of "ideal." No sane person would want such a relationship as a way of seeking pleasure. For the Spartans, however, as a result of their peculiar idiosyncrasies, it "worked." And yet, we see that boredom, repetition, lack of curiosity and monotony, the real demons in modern couples (and not an infrequent cause of dissatisfaction, infidelity, breakups or perversions that emerge when breaking the routine) were uncommon in Spartan marriages.

Spartan privacy and discretion were, in fact, the opposite of the relations of our days: pure appearance and social desirability with a public, not private basis. Spartans understood this important issue and lived in conformity with it. They favored the meeting of men and women in popular events, but they kept loving relationships strictly private. (Millennia later, the SS also understood it, and on their tables of values they firmly stamped: "Maintain the mysterious appearance of love!") The strength of their love came from themselves, unlike the infantile current relationships whose fuel is the external world outside the couple, without which the couple is empty and cannot function.

Spartan Romanticism was the epitome of love in the Iron Age: love in a hostile area and in difficult times. Marriage relationships were

designed for the exchange to be beneficial. Today, the marriage almost invariably castrates man, making him fat, cowardly, lazy, and turning the woman into a manipulative, hedonistic, whimsical and poisonous individual.

On the other hand, there was another controversial Spartan measure that had to do with the need to procreate. If a man began to grow old and knew a young man whose qualities admired, he could present him to his wife to beget robust offspring. The woman could cohabit with another man who accepted her, if he was of greater genetic value than her husband (i.e., if he was a better man). This was not considered adultery but a service to the race. Also, if a woman was barren or began to decline biologically, the husband was entitled to take a fertile woman who loved him, and he was not considered an adulterer. In Viking society (the kind of society that came from the ancient Dorians) if a woman was unfaithful with a man manifestly better than her husband, it was not considered adultery.

The above may seem sordid and primitive; it may seem an annulment of the individual or of the order, and "reduce a man to the status of cattle," but with the strong desire of offspring in Sparta they cared little about selfish or individual desires. To the forces of Nature and race personal whims are unimportant; what matters is that the offspring are healthy and robust, and that the torrent of children is never extinguished. These peculiar measures, that in an undisciplined people would have provoked chaos, in the Spartans, used to discretion and order, did not cause any problems. On the other hand, we must avoid falling into the trap of thinking that all couples "got laid." In the majority of cases both partners were healthy and fertile and did not need of any "assistance."

What was considered the birth in Sparta in the context of this natural mindset? A good way to explain it is quoting an Italian Fascist slogan, "War is to the male what childbearing is to the female." The duty of man was sacrificing his strength from day to day and shed his blood on the battlefield, and women's to struggle to give birth and raise healthy

children. Since their childhood that was the sacred duty they had been taught.

In this environment, a Spartan woman who refused to give birth would have been as unpopular as a Spartan man who refused to fight, for the woman who refuses to give birth sabotaged the sacrifice of the young warrior just as the man who refuses to defend home sabotaged the efforts of the young mother who gives birth. It would have been more than a sacrilege: a betrayal. Artemis, the most revered female deity in Sparta, was, among other things, the goddess of childbirth, and was invoked when the young women were giving birth. In any case, labor for Spartan women should not have been traumatic, first because since their childhood their bodies were hardened and they exercised the muscles that would help them give birth; secondly because they conceived their children while they were still young and strong, and thirdly because they gave birth under a happy and proud motivation of duty, aided by a knowledge and a natural medicine confirmed by many generations of mothers and Spartan nurses.

The great freedom of women in Sparta did not imply that women were handed over leadership or positions of power. The woman was not the driving, but the inspiring, generating and conservative force. She did not dominate but subtly influenced, strangely reaffirming the character of men. A woman could be a priestess or a queen, but not meddled in the affairs of political and warrior leadership, because that meant taking a role associated with the masculine side. The woman was a pure ideal that must at all costs be kept away from the dirty side of politics and war command, but always present in society and in the thought of the warrior, because that was where resided her mysterious power. It was in the mind of men where the woman became a conductive force, meaning memory-love (in terms of Minni) and inspiration.

To Gorgo, queen of Sparta, wife of king Leonidas, a foreign woman once said that only Spartan women kept any real influence over men, and the queen answered, “because we are the only ones who give birth to real men.” Again, they had influence over men, but not power. In ancient

Scandinavian meetings, as an example of the value of the feminine influence, only married men were allowed to vote. The man was the one who made the decisions, but it was assumed that he was not complete until he had at his side a complementary, feminine spirit, a Woman who could transmit certain magic everyday, and inspired him with her reflections and only then he was allowed to vote. In practice, every marriage was a single vote. On the other hand, in the other Hellenic states the female presence was banished, thus unbalancing the mentality and behavior of the warrior, and finally facilitating the emergence of pederast homosexuality. The whole issue of Spartan femininity was really inconceivable in the rest of Greece.

The Athenians called the Spartan women *fainomérides* ("those that show the thighs") as a reproach of their freedom of dress. This was because the Spartans were still using the old Dorian *peplos*, which was open in the waist side. It was part of a women's fashion, more comfortable and lighter than the female clothing in the rest of Greece: where fashions flourished of extravagant hairstyles, makeup, jewelry or perfumes. It was a fashion for healthy Spartan women. But the rest of Hellas, as far as women are concerned, was already infected with Eastern customs: which kept them permanently locked up at home; where their bodies weakened and sick minds developed. The Athenian poet Euripides (480-406 BCE) was shocked at the fact that the "daughters of the Spartans... leave home" and "mingle with men showing her thighs."

THE GOVERNMENT

"Now once it had struck me that Sparta, despite having one of the lowest populations, had nonetheless clearly become the most powerful and most famous in Greece, I wondered how this had ever happened. But I stopped wondering once I had pondered the Spartiate institutions, for they have achieved success by obeying the laws laid down for them by Lycurgus."

—Xenophon, *Constitution of the Lacedaemonians*

The Spartan power was not a cold bureaucratic machine in the dark about passions and impulses. It was a spiritual being that had taken root in the soul of every Spartan that was alive and had a will. Spartan leaders measured their quality in that they were able to be worthy of being receptacles and transmitters of such will, which was precisely the aim of their training and their discipline: to become the tools by which the Spartan state, intangible but irresistible, materialized on Earth and expressed its will.

The whole organization of Sparta was such a unique and exemplary power that it deserves that we focus now on its various separate political institutions, after having addressed nurture, education, the military and marriage, which were themselves institutions.

A) The dyarchy. The Spartan government was headed by two kings who ruled together. Being heads of the political, military and religious power, they carried out the jobs of chief priests and leaders of the Army. This curious sign of two-headed power came out not only because this way a king controlled the authority of the other, but as a symbolic stroke (remember Romulus and Remus) of the ancient, mythical kings.

In the case of Sparta, both kings were symbolically related in

religious worship with the mythical twins Castor and Pollux, supernatural giants endowed with overdeveloped senses; sons of Zeus and members of the männerbund of the Argonauts that, mythologically, were the first monarchs of the country.

Each king chose two representatives to the oracle of Delphi. In wartime, only one of the kings was with the army, while the other remained to rule in the city. The belligerent king was obliged to be the first to go to war and the last to return. In combat, he also stood in the place of greatest risk—in the first row on the far right of the phalanx. (In the first row of the phalanx, composed exclusively of officers, the shields formed a wall. As the shields were wielded with the left arm and the weapons with the right, the shield protected the wearer's left side and the right of the adjacent comrade. It was a great symbol of fellowship, for the protection of the right side depended on the adjacent comrade. However, the warrior who was on the extreme right of the shield lacked a partner to protect his right side, so he should be especially bold: it was the royal post.)

It was tradition that the king and the commanders who made war surround themselves with an elite guard of 300 selected men, the *Hippeis*. It is said that a Spartan aspired to this body and, inexplicably, was glad when he was informed that he had not been admitted. A foreigner, unaccustomed to the Spartan ways, asked why he rejoiced and the Spartan answered, with the utmost sincerity, that he was glad that his country was well protected if you had three hundred men better than himself.

In the elite guard there always was at least one Spartan that had been crowned victor in the Olympic games, and certainly there was no lack of champions in Sparta, as in the various Olympic games from 720 BCE to 576 BCE of eighty-one known winners, forty-six—more than half—were Spartans; and of thirty-six winners of foot races, twenty-one were Spartans. And Sparta was the least populous state in Greece and its men were not "professional" athletes specializing in a particular discipline, but full-time soldiers for which overall athleticism was a mere hobby. There

was a Spartan wrestler who someone attempted to bribe to lose in a competition during the Olympic games. Having refused the bribe and winning the fight, he was asked: "Spartan, what good has earned your victory?" He responded with a smile from ear to ear: "I will fight against the enemy next to my king." The victors in the Olympic games were regarded as touched by the gods.

The first kings of Sparta were the twin sons of King Aristodemus; henceforth, every king came from an ancient and legendary Spartan family, that of Eurysthenes and Procles, both claiming descent from Heracles, although Eurysthenes was more revered by virtue of his greater antiquity.

Strange as it might seem, in all Hellas Spartan monarchy was regarded as the oldest in the world: a very remote descendant of a line going back to the very gods and the ancient, "among the snow" hyperborean homeland of the distant ancestors of the Hellenes.

The princes were not educated in the standard Agoge like the other Spartan children. Their education strongly emphasized military skill and strategy, but added the notions of diplomacy and political thought. In addition, the princes were allowed to double food rations of the rest of the people.

In short, the monarchy of Sparta had a mystical and sacred character that permeated their subjects and inspired self-improvement. The kings were regarded as the embodiment of all that Spartan people had as divine.

B) The Ephorate. Under the kings—although in practice even more powerful—was a five *ephoroi* cabinet (ephors, or "guards") called Ephorate. Originally they were the high priests of each of the five villages, districts or military garrisons that formed the archaic Sparta, but their power gradually escalated once Lycurgus disappeared; they somehow became to replace him.

The Ephorate was the most powerful institution of Sparta. It ran

eugenics, parenting, education, the military and foreign policy, and also had the power to veto any decision from the Senate or the Assembly. They served as supreme judges and presided the diplomatic meetings and assemblies. Two ephors always accompanied the king in season, and had the power to call the kings to their presence in order to seek explanations for their behavior if they acted wrong. They even had the power to arrest or depose them if necessary if an offence was committed, but they needed divine authorization through an oracle. The ephors, who were elderly veterans selected for their prestige and wisdom, did not even stood up in the presence of kings, and it could be said they were their "overseers," ensuring that no king was asleep in the laurels or fell into tyranny.

C) The senate. Under the ephors was the *Gerousia*, the senate or council of thirty lifetime *gerontes*, including the two kings and twenty-eight other citizens who have passed the age of sixty, selected among the volunteers from prestigious and old Spartan families. The Spartan senate tradition came from the thirty military chiefs who swore allegiance to Lycurgus during his coup.

D) The assembly. Called *Apella* or *Ecclesia*, this assembly was a popular body that included all Spartan males over thirty years, who elected the members of the Senate and the Ephorate. Sometimes they could approve or veto the decisions of the Senate, although they had no right to question the decisions of the ephors.

E) On the elections. It has been mentioned the existence of elections to choose leaders. These elections had nothing to do with the current elections, where the fashionable whim of a sheepish majority imposes an anonymous, and therefore cowardly vote lacking responsibility and maturity. In Sparta the ratings were made by acclamation: the candidate who received the most overwhelming cheers and the most tumultuous applause triumphed. (Schiller wrote: "the votes should be weighed, not counted.") Contrary to what it may seem, this method is smarter than the incumbent democratic, insofar as it empowered the candidate who always had the loyalty of the citizens, or at least its most determined mass, which is what matters.

Do not forget that this citizenship had nothing of a mob since it was made up only of the Spartan males of more than thirty years whose loyalty, righteousness and strength were more than proven over twenty-three years of enormous sacrifices and privations. In case of doubt, they resorted to a simple method: supporters stood to one side, and the other to the other side. So the vote was direct and those responsible could be called into account, in case of wrong decision.

F) Nomocracy: the kings obeying the law. All these institutions and methods were certainly unique arrangements. Plato, speaking about the Spartan power said:

> *Megillus: And yet, Stranger, I perceive that I cannot say, without more thought, what I should call the government of Lacedaemon, for it seems to me to be like a tyranny—the power of our Ephors is marvelously tyrannical; and sometimes it appears to me to be of all cities the most democratical; and who can reasonably deny that it is an*

> *aristocracy? We have also a monarchy which is held for life, and is said by all mankind, and not by ourselves only, to be the most ancient of all monarchies; and, therefore, when asked on a sudden, I cannot precisely say which form of government the Spartan is [Laws, IV, 712].*

The Spartans, however, didn't split hairs and called their form of government *Eunomia*, that is, good order. They also called their system *Cosmos* as it was everything they knew: it was the world in which they moved and was unique with respect to all other systems.

King Archidamus II of Sparta, the son of king Zeuxidamus, when asked who was in charge of Sparta, responded: "The laws, and the judges according to the laws." But these laws were not written down at all, but in the blood and the scars of the children of Sparta. They dwelt within men after a long process of training and internalization that made them suitable depositories. They were not girded dogmas blinded to the exceptions, but were perfectly flexible and adaptable to various cases. The kings voluntarily submitted to the laws, as they were considered a gift that the gods themselves had done to Sparta through the Lycurgus mediation.

In conclusion, in Sparta Lycurgus' laws governed, a sort of nomocracy (as formerly in Brahmanic India or as Judaism to this day), so they made sure that Lycurgus in Sparta continued to rule even centuries after his death.

ON THE PAGAN MENTALITY, THE RELIGIOUS SENTIMENT OF THE SPARTANS, AND SUPREMACY OVER ATHENS

> *"And in Lacedaemon and Crete not only men but also women have a pride in their high cultivation. And hereby you may know that I am right in attributing to the Lacedaemonians [Lacedaemonia was the name borne by the city of Sparta from Late Antiquity to the 19th century] this excellence in philosophy and speculation: If a man converses with the most ordinary Lacedaemonian, he will find him seldom good for much in general conversation, but at any point in the discourse he will be darting out some notable saying, terse and full of meaning, with unerring aim; and the person with whom he is talking seems to be like a child in his hands."*
>
> *—Plato, Protagoras*

Religion in Sparta played a major role, far above any other Greek state. Spartan supremacy was not only physical, but spiritual. This apparent contradiction is explained by the Hellenic religion, drinking directly from the original Indo-European religion: *a religion of the strong*—not a religion of self-pity and worship of the sick, the weak, the downtrodden and unhappy. In Sparta, also, that religion had been placed at the service of a shield specifically designed to withstand the rigors of the Iron Age.

Hellenic polytheism was something deeply natural and vital, and is

inextricably woven to the memory of the blood, as "divinity consists precisely in that there are Gods and not one god." Our ancestors made of their gods spiritual monuments containing all those qualities peculiar to them that had made them thrive and succeed. They deposited in them higher feelings with which they gave way and perfected together a being who existed before in fuzzy and dormant state. The creation of gods is something capital when valuing a people, for the gods are the personification of the highest ideals and values of that people. One can say that the gods created the race, and the race their gods. Through the gods we can know the people who worshiped them, the same way that through the people—ourselves, our ancestors, our history and our brothers—we meet the gods.

The peoples had their gods and the gods had their villages. Sparta worshiped typical Hellenic deities, although two among them acquired singularly relevant and important roles and became the most worshiped deities, even by the time of the Dorian invasion: Apollo and Artemis. They were twin brothers, reconfirming the cult of "sacred twins." Their father was Zeus, the heavenly father; and their mother was Leto, daughter of Titans, who to escape the jealousy of Hera (Zeus' heavenly wife) had to become a she-wolf and run away to the country of the hyperboreans. Note here the presence of an important symbolic constant, the heavenly principle (Zeus, eagle, lightning) together with the earthly principle (Leto, wolf, titan).

Apollo was the son of Zeus and brother of Artemis, god of beauty, of poetry (he was called "blond archpoet"), music, bow and arrow, youth, the sun, the day; of manhood, light and pride. He could predict the future and each year returned from Hyperborea in a chariot drawn by swans. (As Lohengrin, the king of the Grail, with his boat, and like other medieval myths about the "Swan Knight" as Helias—obviously a version of the Roman Helios in France.) Apollo presided over the chorus of the nine muses, deities that inspired artists, and lived on Mount Helicon. He was conceived as a young, blond and blue-eyed man, holding a lyre, harp or bow, and possessor of a manly, clean, youthful and pure beauty

—"Apollonian" beauty. The mythology explained that in his childhood he killed the serpent Python (in other versions a dragon), setting in its place, with the help of the hyperboreans, the sanctuary of Delphi.

Heracles also killed a snake when he was a newborn. Such legends represent the struggle that initially led the Indo-European invaders against the telluric gods of the pre-Indo-European peoples. Apollo received several titles including Phoebus ("radiant"), Aegletes ("light of the sun") and Lyceus ("born of wolf," as in some way were Romulus and Remus). As equivalents gods of Apollo in other peoples we have Apollo Phoebus (Roman), Abellio or Belenus (Celtic), Baldur (German), Byelobog (Slavs), Lucifer (medieval heretics), Baal (Phoenician), the Beelzebub demonized by the Church and Belial: another demon of Christianity.

Apollo was worshiped in the most important festival of Sparta, the Carnea. There they paid homage to the under-god in the figure of the ram. To carry out the rituals the priests chose five unmarried men who for four years should continue a vow of chastity.

Artemis was the sister of Apollo, daughter of Zeus, goddess of night, moon, bow and arrow; of forests, hunting and virginity, but also of labor and male fertility. Artemis was usually depicted armed with bow and silver arrows, wearing a short and light tunic or skins of wild animals, carrying her hair up and accompanied by a pack of hunting dogs. Her car was pulled by deer, the animal most associated with her, and in fact she is sometimes depicted with horns of deer, reminiscent of the most primitive paganism. She was chaste and virgin in perpetuity, and virgin were her priestesses, Melissa ("bees," another symbol of Artemis). She was harsh, stern, proud, sharp, wild, silent and cold: the result of a patriarchal work, the only model of female divinity able to command respect and devotion to such an ascetic and leathery virility as the Spartan.

The Dorian Artemis equaled the Celtic Artio, the Roman Diana, and the Slavic Dievana; but she had nothing to do with the Artemis

worshiped by eunuch priests in the temple of Ephesus (Asia Minor, now modern Turkey): a goddess of "fertility" often depicted with black skin, multiple breasts, whimsical hairstyles, a body adornment and other oriental distortions. (Dievana was conceived by the ancient Slavs as a virgin goddess associated with hunting and the moon. For the Poles, she was a young virgin who hunted in the forests. South Slavs imagined her running through the forests of the Carpathians, and other Slavic peoples imagined her accompanied by bears or a pack of dogs. All these configurations correspond clearly to the Greek Artemis or Roman Diana.) In Greek mythology Artemis was a mentor to the young Atalanta, who became the best runner of Hellas, and no one, not even a god, was closer to conquer her than the mortal hero Orion. Apollo and Artemis were, finally, the sacred twin couple; day and night, sun and moon, gold and silver. They were the juvenile archetypes of Spartan masculinity and femininity, respectively.

Sparta venerated the heroes of the *Iliad*, especially Achilles, but also Menelaus and Helen, kings of Sparta in Homer's mythology. Heracles was practically a Spartan national hero (remember that, according to tradition, he was the patriarch that founded the royal lineages of Sparta), and his figure was hugely popular among young men.

The city of Sparta had forty-three temples dedicated to various gods and twenty-two temples dedicated to the heroes (including those of the *Iliad*), whose deeds inspired the flourishing generations; more than fifteen statues of gods, four altars and numerous funerary tombs. There was also a temple dedicated to Lycurgus, worshiped as a god. In a city the size of Sparta, the number of religious buildings was very noticeable.

In religious ceremonies, men and women—particularly those in age of dating—attended, entirely naked as they did during the processions, the tournaments, the beauty contests and the dances. This already implies that the Spartans were not ashamed of their bodies, but that proudly displayed them whenever they could because they were robust, well-formed and harmonious. These events were festivals of beauty, Dionysian ceremonies in which the body was worshiped and beautified

by effort and sacrifice. According to Plato, a beautiful body promises a beautiful soul and "beauty is the splendor of truth."

The athletic custom of shaving the body hair and smear oneself with oil before a competition was of Spartan origin, although the Celts were given to body shave before battles. They sought thereby to extol the body; give relief, volume, detail, brightness and "life" to the muscles, therefore proudly displaying the result of years and years of grueling physical training and strenuous efforts, probably with the aim of finding the best partner and/or gaining prestige.

The guilt and sense of sin that Christianity tried to impose in the field of body pride made man feel ashamed of the very things he was proudest. Judeo-Christian morality, by condemning hygiene, care, training and the preparation of the body as "sinful," "sensual" and "pagan" gradually achieved that the European population—converted into an amorphous herd whose attitude to any hint of divine perfection was met with resentment and mistrust—forgot that their bodies also were a creation and a gift from God.

For young people of both sexes such festivals served to became familiar with each other, because we think that Sparta was a city with few inhabitants, where thanks to public ceremonies everyone knew everybody by sight and was integrated into the popular. It was at these events where you watched and chose your future spouse. The competition also served to establish hierarchies in beauty, courage, strength, agility, hardness, endurance, courage, skill and speed; and the best men would join the best women, as might be the case for the coronation of a king and a queen in a contest, or a champion and a championess in a competition. In his *Republic* Plato said that it is necessary that the best men join the best women most of the time, and that the worst men join the worst women; and that you have to raise the children of the first, not those of the second. Thanks to this, and to the facilities and even obligations of marriage, the young Spartans married men and women between twenty and twenty-five years.

Le us imagine all those pagan cults of sacrifice, struggle, union and that glorification of the collective existence of a great people. That's pride and socialist joy or nationalism, a cult for effort and struggle through which the Spartans themselves nourished themselves, as the warriors' deeds made that the youngest would want to match them and beat them, they longed for their opportunity to demonstrate their flowering qualities. Moreover, knowledge of the deeds of the society helped Spartans to know themselves; to be proud of their homeland, and to become aware of its grandeur and superiority. Everything was wisely designed for the burning of Spartan pride to last.

What would ritualism in such a "socialist" country be? It was simple and austere, and the Spartans took it with fanatical solemnity, for all rituals were perfect and the result flawless. The rites had to be carried out at whatever cost. It is known that before the battles the Spartans celebrated a sacrifice, usually a male goat: a fertility sign, and under no circumstances they fought before the ritual was consummated. There is the story of how this was practiced to an extreme once the enemy appeared during the ritual. The Spartans did not move from their positions until the ending of the ceremonial, even when the first enemy arrows started the killing and wounding others. When the ritual ended they fought and won the battle. Such kind of feelings, orbiting around rites in which they reproduced symbolic events, kept them in contact with the beyond: where the force of the fallen and the ancient fathers dwelt.

All these elements contributed to form a highly spiritual feeling: the Spartan felt himself as the summit of creation, the favorite of the gods, a privileged, magnificent, splendid, arrogant and godlike creature; a member of a holy seed, a holy race and lucky "link in the eternal racial chain," a protagonist of an unparalleled feat of an extremely profound mystical experience that he was convinced would end up leading him directly to the immortality of Olympus, as the semi-divine heroes he worshiped. He was proud of being a Spartiate because precisely the fact that to become one of them it was necessary to overcome the hardest

ordeals made him feel a holder of a privilege.

Nietzsche said, “For a tree to reach Heaven with its branches, it must first touch Hell with its roots,” and it is said that Odin went down to the huts before ascending to the palaces. This implies that only after passing the most terrible tests the warrior has earned the right to access to higher states, on pain of suffering the degradation to which it leads the drunken arrogance of the one who has not hardened in suffering and is not able to take the pleasure, power and luxury with respect, care, gentleness, veneration, humility and an almost apprehensive appreciation. The Spartans had reached the bottom, sinking into the whole tragedy of their atrocious instruction, and also had passed through all the manly sensations of fullness, health, vigor, strength, power, force, dominion, glory, victory, joy, camaraderie, reward and triumph. Having covered the whole emotional range that goes from pain to pleasure made them possessors of a wisdom exclusive for the heroes and the fallen, and surely no one could appreciate more the significance and importance of pleasures than the Spartans.

It existed in Sparta, as in other places, an initiating circle of priests and priestesses. Little is known about them except that they were selected men and women, initiated at specific sites in secret ceremonies called “mysteries,” which made them the repositories of ancient wisdom and esoteric mystical orientation. In Greece, the mysteries represented what could not be explained rationally with words, but that was necessary to see and live it. The mysteries (of Delphi, Eleusis, Delos, Samothrace, Orpheus, etc.) became prestigious initiation schools, with important people attending from all Hellas with intent of awakening the spirit. Much of what we know of them is related to a decadent age which had betrayed the secret, so the ritual was monstrously disfigured and the true mysteries gone.

Mount Taygetos, symbol of pride and elitism of Sparta, was also called Mount Dionysius because it was there where the Spartans worshiped this god in a mystery of elaborate ritual ceremonies, the mysteries of Dionysus. Dionysus is a kind of Hellenic Shiva (in

Hinduism, Shiva is said to meditate on the top of Mount Meru): a divine, destructive and dancing archetype. Much confusion has arisen around Dionysus, so we will try to clean up the image of this god.

The mythology explained that Dionysus was the son of Zeus (a masculine and heavenly principle) and of some earthly goddess (an earthly, feminine principle) that, according to some versions, is Demeter, Persephone and Semele. Dionysius had been torn (like the Egyptian Osiris and the Vedic Purusha) and eaten by the Titans (chthonic entities) but, as the Titans ended up breeding men, all men have within them a spark of Dionysus. Zeus could save the heart of Dionysus and, planting it in the womb of his mother (in other versions, in Zeus' thigh), Dionysus was reborn and rose to the rank of "twice born."

Dionysus was the god of the strong instincts, of the fullness of life, spiritual abundance, the joy of life, transparent pleasure, gratitude; the joyful and furious frenzy of happiness that, wanting earthly eternity, needs the children. It was par excellence the god of the healthy and strong: of that popular pagan joy that overflows and creates in its abundant happiness—or destroys in its unbridled rage—; the god of the instincts that make one feel alive and rise the race above its material limitations or from everyday pettiness.

Over time, however, as Hellas was losing its purity, the cult of Dionysus was easily perverted (being a god of bodily, material and "dark" impulses) and became a fat god of orgies: a noisy god of amusements, alcohol, promiscuity and insane hysteria. The Romans adopted this deformed god as Bacchus, and his followers (mostly cowardly, decadent, perverted, morbid and boring women of good families) made the cult degenerate into orgies including blood sacrifices, promiscuous sex and alcohol poisoning. It was such a scandal formed around the Bacchanalia that the senate of Rome in 186 BCE forbade it and exterminated its followers in a great slaughter.

The supremacy over Athens

At this point, we must address the issue that will certainly be around the heads of many readers: the comparison Sparta-Athens. What city was "better"?

Often we are told that Athens represented the artistic and spiritual summit of Greece and Sparta the physical and warrior evolution. It's not as easy as that. We must start from the basis that it is a great mistake to judge the development of a society for its commercial or material advancement. This would lead us to conclude that the illiterate Charlemagne was lower than anybody else present, or Dubai the home of the world's most exalted civilization.

It is necessary to better assess the spirituality, health, individual quality and the genetic background of which a society is depository. This could ground us in unusual lands, for instance, that the Cro-Magnon culture was highest that has stepped on the planet. As already mentioned, not without reason it has been said that the whole Spartan state was an order, a union of warrior-monks, as the Spartans zealously cultivated a discipline and ancient wisdom that most Greek states had lost. Many have noticed that the harsh Spartan discipline practices have a distinctively touch of a warrior yoga, meaning that any ascetic yoga practice would help the physical, mental and spiritual improvement. In Sparta everything worked within the mystique and the uttermost devotion of the people of Greece, and it is a huge mistake to believe that the only polished Spartan instruction was the body.

Thus we come to the important subject of art. It usually happens that it is a common argument to vilify Sparta. The Spartans used to say that they carved monuments in the flesh, which implied that their art was a living one: literally them, and the individuals that composed their homeland.

But Sparta also had conventional art as understood in the present. It was famous throughout Greece for its music and dance (of which nothing

has survived), as well as its highly-prized poetry that has come to us fragmented. Its architects and sculptors were employed in such prestigious places as Delphi and Olympia, and imposed a stamp of straight simplicity and crystal clarity in their works. The best example of this is the sober Doric style, direct heritage of Sparta that became a model not only for countless temples throughout Greece, as the Parthenon in Athens itself, but also for the classic taste of later Europe that has endeavored to continue the legacy of Greece and Rome.

The Greeks, and particularly the Spartans, studied "physiognomy" to interpret the character, personality, and ultimately the soul of an individual based on physical features, especially of the face to the point that ugliness in certain Greek states was practically a curse. It was also believed that beauty and a willingness of the features should be an expression of noble qualities necessary for a beautiful body bearer, if only dormant. The creators of the Greek statues made them with that knowledge of the human face and of the perfect proportions in mind, and therefore represented not only a beautiful body but also a beautiful body carrying a beautiful soul. The blind rage with which the Christians destroyed most Greek statues indicates that they greatly feared what they represented, because in them the Hellenes fixed and settled, once and for all, as a goal and template and ideal: the human type that Christianity would never be able to produce.

Many other states, on the other hand, suffered from a taste for the exotic and the cosmopolitan in which all empires fall when they neglect their attention, authenticity and identity. Gobineau called Athens the most Phoenician of the Greek cities (*Essay on the Inequality of Human Races*, Book IV, Chapter IV). Athens, with the plutocracy of Piraeus; with its mob of merchants, charlatans, noisy slaves, acrobats, pseudo-intellectuals, pundits, soothsayers and false Egyptian magicians; sumptuous clothes, rich food, spices, incense, colors, flavors, perfumes, obscene riches, deformed mystery cults, orgiastic ceremonies, prostitution, alcoholism, dirt, disease, and finally rampant decay in demagoguery including cosmopolitanism, hedonism, homosexuality,

multiculturalism and miscegenation, was farther from the European ideal than Sparta, which did not embrace this filth (only when it was not Sparta anymore). Spartiates remained essentially rustic, rough and authentic.

In Athens there emerged countless philosophical schools (some of them, as the sophists and cynics, reflecting a clearly decadent spirit) which attests the chaos and contradictions within the Athenian citizens and the Athenian national body itself. Demagoguery and the sagacity of the slave, the shopkeeper, the merchant, the Phoenician dealer, and the nomad of the desert began to leave a mark. And this is acclaimed by historians of philosophy that teach today (Julius Evola pointed out the pleasure with which modern civilization sees in Athens the origin of democracy). In Sparta people did not ramble or speculated because its inhabitants knew the laws of the land, the sky and the species; and lived in agreement with them with no hustle, speculation, or absurd discussions.

The Athenians despised them because they considered the Spartans brutal and simple. The Spartans despised Athenians because they considered them soft and effeminate even though the Athenians, as Greeks, were also great athletes—though never to the level of the Spartans. It is said that a Spartan who contemplated a painting depicting victorious Athenians was asked “Are those Athenians brave?” He replied “Yes, in painting.”

There was a latent rivalry between the Ionian people of an Athens influenced by Asia Minor, and the Dorian people of Sparta directly influenced by their own Nordic heritage, who never stopped being governed by anything but their ancestral tradition and their own popular consciousness. With the exception of Athens, which saw herself as the best, all other Hellenic states reserved their admiration for Sparta, seeing it as a shrine of wisdom and justice: the true repository of primitive Hellenic tradition. Sparta was always the most famous and respected city among the Greeks. They always resorted to it to arbitrate interstate disputes, and most of the times they not even had to resort to force:

Sparta sent an ambassador to which everyone would voluntarily submit, like a divine envoy.

THE SPARTAN POLITICS FOR THEIR INFERIORS: THE CRYPTEIA

"Self-sacrifice enables us to sacrifice other people without blushing."

—George Bernard Shaw, Man and Superman

The Spartans kept themselves segregated from non-Spartans to keep their valuable essence undisturbed. Not only racism and aloofness, but the lack of mercy towards their slaves were for the Spartiate a vital necessity that soothed his paranoia in the short-term and also renewed it the long-term. Let us turn our attention, then, to the outcome of the acute racism among the Spartans.

The situation of caste stratification in Sparta was unique, because the life of the aristocracy was much tougher than the life of the people. That did not happen in other civilizations, where the common people wanted to take over the way of life of the dominant caste. The Helots did not want—in the least—to submit themselves to the ruthless discipline of the Spartan life compared with which the cultivation of the soil was simple, smooth and painless.

It was the ephors who, each year, with the greatest solemnity declared war on the Helots; that is, they authorized to kill freely without it being considered murder. Once a year, the Helots were beaten in public for no reason; each Helot should be beaten a number of times every year just to remember that he was still a slave. And when the government thought they had bred too much or suspected they planned uprisings, the *crypteia* or *krypteia* took place.

Crypteia is a word that means “hidden,” “occult” or even “secret” and “underground” (words with the particle *crypto* derive from this), taking the name from a test of the deep symbolism that many Spartan boys of instruction age had to submit. Alone, barefoot, without warm clothes and provided only with a knife, the chosen Spartan lad was thrown into inhabited Helot lands. He remained long time hiding in the daylight hours, obtaining his food from nature and living outdoors. During the dark hours, stealthy he stalked Helots and entered into their roads and their properties quietly and silently: killing as many of them that he could, stealing food and probably removing some bloody trophy that demonstrated the success of his hunt. Thousands of Helots fell this way throughout the history of Sparta and probably many young Spartans as well.

This ordeal has been considered as a military exercise or a baptism of blood and a warrior initiation ritual. Some have even elevated the importance of the *crypteia* institution to the level of initiation: a kind of secret service composed of the most fanatical cubs of promising Spartans, designed specifically to contain the growth of the Helots and keep them psychologically subjugated, and revitalize the tension between the two ends of the scale that made the Laconia State.

The young Spartan, after years of living in nature, had become accustomed to it. The long days of loneliness made his senses sharpen; get used to sniff the air, and feel like a real predator. At night he descended down the mountain to fall upon his victims with all the ferocity that his racism endowed; his training, and his natural disposition to sacrifice and death, hiding afterwards. After completing the mission he returned victorious to his home. This was the culmination of the guerrilla training, confirming that the Spartans were not herd animals but also lone wolves: great fighters in droves (not herd because the herd is hierarchical), and able to manage by themselves when needed: excellent collective soldiers in open warfare but also fearsome individual fighters in that elusive, dark, and dirty war so characteristic of the Iron Age.

This guerrilla training could have originated since the first

Messenian war, in which the military formations were destroyed and they had to resort to hand strikes; ambushes and assassinations taking advantage of what the field (forest, mountains, towns) could offer, the tactical situation (unprotected, unarmed, distracted or careless enemy) and the environmental conditions (night, darkness, fog). But this mode of combat was also devised as a way of preparing to resist if Sparta fell under his enemies and suffered a military occupation. In the event of such a catastrophe, every Spartan male was ready to flee to the woods or forest with nothing; survive on his own, and run selective attacks and ambushes on the enemy. It was, therefore, a form of leaderless resistance. Another event taken into account was a Messenian rebellion in which the rebels withdrew to the fields; Sparta being embroiled in a nasty guerrilla war to hunt them down and exterminate them slowly. This, as we shall see, duly took place.

Another example that describes the lack of scruples of the Spartans with their inferiors is provided by the following incident, which occurred in 424 BCE.

The Spartan government had reason to believe that the Helots were going to rebel. After a battle in which the Spartans hired recruits, they liberated 2,000 of those Helots who had distinguished themselves for valor in combat. After having organized a banquet to celebrate it and placed laurels on their heads, the ephors ordered to kill them all. Those 2,000 men disappeared in the woods without a trace and no more was heard of them. And as the bravest Helots had been eliminated in this immense *crypteia*, Helot population, bereft of leaders, did not rebel. We can imagine the psychological effect that the massacre had on their compatriots. This story made evident how far the Spartans abandoned all chivalry, code of honor or moral behavior when they thought they were defending the existence of their people.

Another Spartan law with racist connotations was to prohibit hair dyes. In the rest of Greece dyes were common; as were blonde wigs, the methods of hair bleaching and the elaborate and extravagant hairstyles like those of Babylon or Etruria (and later in decadent Rome). At one

stage of the devolution, when the original native breed in Greece was being diluted by miscegenation, the dyes and the concoctions for hair bleaching were highly prized, especially among women. The same would happen in decadent Rome: Roman wigs were made with the golden hair taken from female German prisoners.

In Sparta the influx of foreigners was jealously limited. It was only possible to visit Sparta for pressing reasons. Similarly, the very Spartans were rarely allowed to travel abroad, and even the slave trade was banned. This was motivated by the interest of the elite that its core would not be not corrupted by the softness of foreign customs. The Spartans undoubtedly were great xenophobes.

WAR

My brethren in war! I love you from the very heart. I am, and was ever, your counterpart. And I am also your best enemy. So let me tell you the truth!

I know the hatred and envy of your hearts. Ye are not great enough not to know of hatred and envy. Then be great enough not to be ashamed of them!

"What is good?" ye ask. To be brave is good. Let the little girls say: "To be good is what is pretty, and at the same time touching."

They call you heartless: but your heart is true, and I love the bashfulness of your goodwill. Ye are ashamed of your flow, and others are ashamed of their ebb.

Your highest thought, however, ye shall have it commanded unto you by me—and it is this: man is something that is to be surpassed.

So live your life of obedience and of war! What matter about long life! What warrior wisheth to be spared!

I spare you not, I love you from my very heart, my brethren in war!—

—Nietzsche

War for the Spartans was a real party as, during wars, they relaxed the cruder aspects of the controls and solid discipline. They permitted that the soldiers beautified their weapons, armor, clothes and hair. They softened the harshness of the exercises and allowed a less severe disciplinary regime in general, plus larger and complete meals. Consequently, for them "the war was a break from the preparing for

war," as Plutarch wrote, and this made them subconsciously prefer war to peace.

Each Spartan was a hoplite (a word that comes from *hoplon*, shield), a formidable war machine, a weapon of mass destruction, an elite soldier infantry: well trained, armed and equipped with the best of his time—a weight of approximately seventy pounds.

The Spartan soldier wore:

• A two-meter spear (which also had a tip at its lower end in order to finish off the fallen).

• A shield (*hoplon* or *aspis*) of ninety centimeters in diameter, weighing nine kilos and lined with bronze. In the center of the shield a bee of natural size was painted (remember that the bee was an attribute of the goddess Artemis). They were always told that the optimum distance for the attack was that where the bee could be clearly distinguished.

• A dagger.

• An armor made of metal plates that allowed some mobility.

• A helmet designed to cover the entire head and the face with holes for the eyes, nose and mouth. It probably evolved from a more primitive model, as used by the Germans, which usually consisted of a cap that protected the face and skull; a bump down the brow to protect the nose, and two bumps on the sides covering the ears or cheeks, whose purpose was to protect the winged attacks to the head.

• Greaves that protected the shins and knees.

• A sword called *xyphos* which hung on the left thigh, and was particularly short to be controlled from compact rows where the hindrance of a long sword was not welcome. The Athenians made fun of the short length of the Spartan swords and the Spartans answered, "He who is not afraid to approach the

enemy does not require long swords."

The Spartan Hoplite also wore a coat. It was red to disguise the color of blood. The visible colors were, then: the red coat, the golden bronze, and the white and black crest, in some places of checkerboard design, like a dualistic sign. (The custom of wearing red textile with the specific goal of disguising the blood also occurred with the Roman legionaries and the imperial British military, the "Redcoats.")

The Spartan hoplites were barefoot during battle because their feet were so tanned that their skin was tougher than any footwear. With them they could climb rocks and stomp on rough snow or spines without even noticing. Their shield—a most important tool and a symbol of camaraderie whose loss was a disgrace (as for the Germans, according to Tacitus)—showed off the Greek letter lambda (Λ / λ), the equivalent to the Rune Laf, representing the sound "L" as initial of Laconia, Lacedaemonia and Lycurgus; although the rune *Ur* (sometimes represented exactly like the lambda and symbolizing virility) may be a more appropriate "translation." The phrase associated with this rune was: "Know yourself and know everything." At the oracle of Delphi it was written, "Know thyself" on a temple, so that the rune *Ur* again fits perfectly in the Spartan context.

Let us now turn our attention to the Spartan warriors. How were the clashes? The captains harangued their men with a traditional formula, "Go ahead, armed sons of Sparta, come into the dance of Ares." In battle they marched in tightly-closed ranks; with calm, discipline and gravity, relying on the immeasurable strength of all their instruction, to the sound of a flute and singing the solemn song of marches known as the Paean, a hymn to Apollo. It was a type of flute traversière which sound is closely associated with the infantry, especially in the eighteenth century. The sound conveyed trust, safety, lightness and a serene joy.

Illustration of a Spartan hoplite. The arms show that the Spartan is terribly muscularly and roasted by the sun and air, since he has been permanently exposed throughout his life. The illustration has some flaws, however. The sword, which should be holstered on the left side of the hip, is absent or not visible. The bronze helmet, shield and greaves on the legs should be shiny as gold, not worn off as the Spartans beautified and polished their weapons and armor, which were clean at the time of combat. There are also extra sandals in the illustration as the Spartans were always barefoot. And the hair color is too dark.

This close formation was called the phalanx, of which the Spartans were the greatest teachers of leading tactics that other Greek strategists considered extremely complicated. Shields formed an impenetrable wall from which soldiers, in serried ranks, side by side, shoulder to shoulder and shield to shield, stabbed and cut with spears and swords. The Macedonians and the Romans (even, in their way, the Spanish troops and the armies of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries) inherited this form of combat that put emphasis on the close order. John Keegan, in his *History of Warfare*, explains it well:

> *Crossing a no man's land perhaps 150 yards wide at a clumsy run, under a weight of armor and weapons of seventy pounds, the ranks drove straight into each other. Each individual would have chosen another as his target at the moment of contact, thrusting his spear point at some gap between shield and shield, and seeking to hit a patch of flesh not covered by armor—throat, armpit or groin. The chance was fleeting. As the second and subsequent ranks were brought up short by the stop in front, the phalanx concertinaed, throwing the weight of seven men on to the back of the warriors engaged with the enemy. Under this impact some men inevitably went down at once, dead, wounded, or overborne from the rear.*
>
> *That might create a breach in the shield wall. Those in the second or third ranks strove to open it wider with their spears, thrusting and jabbing from their relatively protected position at whoever they could reach. If it widened, there followed the othismos, 'push with shield', to widen it further and to win room in which swords, the hoplite's secondary weapon, might be drawn and used to slash at an enemy's legs. The othismos was the most certain method, however: it could lead to the pararrexis or 'breaking', when the most heavily beset by the enemy's pressure began to feel the impulse to flight, and either broke from the rear ranks or, more shamefully, struggled backward from the point of killing to infect their comrades*

with panic also.

As we see, it was a kind of war requiring very good preparation; a methodical fighting type that contrasted with the previous "barbarian" combat: more open, freer, individualistic and furious. The evolution of war marked the evolution of the people. They had discovered that they were stronger together and well coordinated, as if they were a single entity, a god.

All the changes of direction or attack were communicated by the music of the fifes. Today, in the military close order, orders can be given with a bugle, each melody is a determined order. The closed order of modern armies is simply a legacy of the spirit of the Spartan phalanx: socialist institutions to the core. In spite of the fact that close order is no longer the key to success in combat, it is undeniable that it reinforces collective coordination, camaraderie, pride, the *esprit de corps* and ceremonial rituals that so matter in our day, and the difference that converting a set of men into a unit can make.

The battles were bloody and cruel. Obviously, the fighting was hand to hand and the attacks made by cutting or piercing through the body with sharp edges or tips of extremely sharp metal blades, which caused terrible injuries and mutilations. As a result, many suffered war wounds or were maimed. What did these crippled do in a state like Sparta? They just turned up in the battle with the greatest fanaticism to accelerate their own destruction and the arrival of glory. It was normal to see mutilated veterans (remember Miguel de Cervantes), blind, lame or maimed in the ranks of Spartan combatants. A stranger asked a blind hoplite why he would fight in such a state. The blind man said that "at least I'll chip the sword of the enemy."

The Spartans marching into battle always received the shield from their mothers, who delivered them with the severe words, "With it or on it": back with the shield or on the shield, victory or death; because if someone fell in battle the comrades carried the body, and then his ashes,

on the shield. (The Spartans, like all Indo-Europeans from Scandinavia to India, practiced cremation burial ritual.) The shield was thus a lunar symbol equivalent to the cup, which collects the solar essence of fallen hero and, as a cup, related to the archetype of the woman. In fact, a woman delivering the shield is a fairly common archetypal motif in European art of all eras. The shield had, as a talisman, the power to protect not only ourselves but the comrades in arms, so it should be considered almost magical.

The doctrine of loyalty, war, and resurrection of the hero allowed the Spartans to march to the fiercest fighting with a calm serenity and joy that nowadays few would understand and many repudiate. Knowing that they would be unable to do such a thing what is left is vilifying the one who, for self-worth and inner will, was capable of doing it. Before the fighting, tranquility was obvious among them: some combed, cleaned or carefully tended their hair. Others brightened their breastplates and helmets; cleaned and sharpened their weapons, made athletic exercises or measured each other in boxing or wrestling. Even before the legendary battle of Thermopylae, the Persians observers reported an astonished Xerxes that the Spartans were fighting among themselves and combing the hair.

Camaraderie, forged in difficult situations, even in the face of death, was an important part of Spartan society, as it reinforced the union and mutual confidence. The cult of strength, competition and manhood made the comrades in arms to exceed and protect each other. Often an adult men took under his wing a young person or child, although in this case the relationship was like that of the master and pupil, as was the relationship between Achilles (the young, temerarious and vigorous hero) and Patroclus (his prudent and wise mentor, older than him): a relationship that without any justification has been classified simply as homosexual by certain media groups. Something similar to the defaming process of the Achilles-Patroclus relationship has occurred regarding lesbianism. The way that our current society averts healthy people from the Greek ideal, the Indo-European ideal, is to ridicule it and claim that

homosexuality was absolutely normal in Greece by means of pulling out from the sleeve sodomite and lesbian relationships from any reference of fellowship, mastership, devotion and friendship. And this is where modern historiography, clearly serving the interests of social engineering, has gotten his big nose.

The pace of life that the Spartan male bore was of an intensity to kill a herd of rhinos, and not even the women of Sparta would have been able to stand it. Thus the world of the Spartan military was a universe in itself —a universe of men. On the other hand, the intense emotional relationship, the cult of virility and the camaraderie that existed between teacher and student, in phalanx combat and throughout society, has served to fuel these days the myth of homosexuality. On this, Xenophon wrote:

> *The customs instituted by Lycurgus were opposed to all of these [what other Greek states did, nominally Athens and Corinth]. If someone, being himself an honest man, admired a boy's soul and tried to make of him an ideal friend without reproach and to associate with him, he approved, and believed in the excellence of this kind of training. But if it was clear that the attraction lay in the boy's outward beauty, he banned the connexion as an abomination; and thus he caused lovers to abstain from boys no less than parents abstain from sexual intercourse with their children and brothers and sisters with each other. [Constitution of the Lacedaemonians, 2].*

The relationship between man and teenager in Sparta was that of teacher-student, based on respect and admiration: a workout, a way of learning, instruction in their own way. The sacredness of the teacher-student or instructor-aspirant institution has been challenged by our society for a while, just as the männerbund. Yet, both types of relationships are the foundation of the unity of the armies. Today, children grow up in the shadow of the feminine influence of the female

teachers, even through adolescence. It is difficult to know to what extent the lack of male influence limits their wills and ambitions, making them gentle beings, malleable and controllable: what is good for the globalist system.

Others spoke about the Spartan institution of love between master and disciple, but always made it clear that this love was “chaste.” The Roman Aelian said that if two Spartan men “succumbed to temptation and indulged in carnal relations, they would have to redeem the affront to the honor of Sparta by either going into exile or taking their own lives” (at the time exile was considered worse than death).

It is noteworthy that if homosexuality was indeed so natural to the original Hellenes as it was for the Greeks of decadent states, Hellenic mythology would be infested with explicit references to such relationships, which is not, as homosexuality was a plague outside the Hellenic spirit that appeared when Greece was already declining. By the time of Plato, for example, homosexuality was beginning to be tolerated in Athens itself. However, ancient and even some modern authors make it clear that Sparta did not fall in this filth. The fallacy that homosexuality was “traditional” and well regarded in Greece is refuted in detail in the article “El mito derrumbado.”

THE BATTLE OF THERMOPYLAE AS AN EXAMPLE OF HEROISM

> *"A desperate fight remains for all time a shining example. Let us remember Leonidas and his three hundred Spartans!"*
>
> —The Testament of Adolf Hitler (1945)

This is one of the most famous battles in history. It decided the future of Europe and in it the Spartans showed the world their immense quality. The Battle of Thermopylae came framed within the context of the Greco-Persian Wars, which catalyst was the expansion of the Greek presence in Asia Minor with the extension of the Greek colonies to the east. During the Greco-Persian Wars emperor Darius of Persia had been defeated in the famous battle of Marathon (490 BCE), after which Sparta and Athens signed a military pact aimed at the defense of Greece against the Persians in the near future. Darius was succeeded on his death in 485 BCE by the very ambitious Xerxes, who craved to take over large parts of Europe.

Persia was a vast reign ruled by an Iranian aristocracy, the descendants of the Medes, who along with the Persians before them and after the Parthians monopolized, during their existence, the domain of the empire—the largest in the world—, stretching from Turkey to Afghanistan.

Persia was a united and centralized state with vast crowds, massive and specialized armies and endless tracts of land. Its existence was already a feat worthy of those who made it possible. Although the background of this empire was clearly Indo-European it had become an abyss of miscegenation, as it held sway over a wide variety of non-Indo-European peoples, including Jews and the descendants of the ancient

Mesopotamian civilizations. The Punics of Carthage (in what today is Tunisia) in alliance with Persia were ready to strike the Greek dominions in Italy and Sicily. Europe faced foreign hordes, a geopolitical meddling and a flood of eastern blood of magnitude not seen since the Neolithic.

Greece, on the other hand, besides being infinitely smaller, was not even a state but covered a balkanized collection of city-states or *poleis* that often warred with each other. There was no empire—that would come with the Macedonians. The ethnic heritage was, on the whole, more Indo-European in Greece than in Persia, and the strong political personality of the Hellenic polis made of Greece the only major obstacle of the Persian conquest of the Balkans and the Danube.

In the year 481 BCE, before invading Greece, Persia sent two ambassadors to Sparta offering the possibility of surrender. King Leonidas made them to be directly thrown into a well. This impulsive act, little "diplomatic" and highly condemnable, has an explanation. Leonidas had not been raised exactly as a Spartan prince because in first place the throne did not correspond to him. There was a king, but had poor health and did not survive. His succession fell on the following fellow in line, which had been brought up as a prince in anticipation to the health problems of the previous king. This one, however, fell in battle and suddenly Leonidas found himself in the throne of Sparta, having been raised as a common Spartan boy without the diplomatic finesse imparted in princely education. Leonidas was a soldier: blunt, simple and to the point.

It is clear, in any case, that the Ephorate did not consider just the murder of the ambassadors, as it sent two Spartan volunteers to go to Persia, submitted to Xerxes and offered as sacrifice to "atone" for the injustice that Leonidas committed against the ambassadors. Xerxes rejected the offer and let them go. He did not make a similar mistake, or get his hands dirty with blood or being found guilty of dishonor. The Athenians were more sensible: when the Persian ambassadors made their bids, they simply declined.

That same year, Xerxes sent emissaries to all the Greek cities except Sparta and Athens, requesting their submission. Many, terrified of his power, subjected while others, prudently, remained neutral although their sympathies lie with Greece. Sparta and Athens, seeing that an anti-Hellenic alliance was emerging, called for the other cities to form an alliance against Persia. Few responded. Persia was the new superpower, the new star. Its sweeping advance was a fact and its ultimate triumph, almost a given.

Persia began shipping its army, the largest in the world, and moved to Europe to conquer Greece. According to Herodotus, the Persian army consisted of 2 million men. Today, some have reduced this figure to 250,000 or even 175,000 men (including 80,000 cavalry), but it is still a massive army: a crushing and brutal numerical entity, especially compared with the tiny Greek force. As the Persian tide moved, all the villages it passed submitted without a fight.

Hellenic allies then met in Corinth. Envoys from Sparta, Athens, Corinth, Thebes, Plataea, Thespiae, Phocis, Thessaly, Aegina and others, parleyed on the strategy. They formed the Peloponnesian League, confirming the Hellenic alliance to boldly resist Persia. All Peloponnese *poleis* (excluding Argos, a traditional and stubborn enemy of Sparta) joined the alliance. The league was put in command by Sparta; Leonidas was made commander in chief of the troops of the league. The leagues were common occurrences in Greece, and they expressed the more "federalist" trends that somehow sought unification and a proper Pan-Hellenic nation. Some leagues were created only to face a common enemy, dissolving themselves afterwards and other leagues lingered; always pursuing political goals and long-term business. The Peloponnesian League was one of these ephemeral "emergency leagues."

An army of 10,000 was formed of Peloponnesian Greeks under the command of Sparta. Since they had agreed to defend the passage of Tempe, they were stationed on the slopes of Mount Olympus, in northeastern Greece. However, King Alexander I of Macedon, who had good relations with Persia but felt sympathy for the Greeks and especially

for Sparta, warned the Spartan commanders that the position was vulnerable by the presence of several pathways, and they decided to abandon it in favor of another more defensible position. At that time the Thessalians, considering themselves lost, submitted to Persia.

The definitive site for the defense of Greece was established in the pass of Thermopylae, the "Hot Gates." According to legend, Heracles had rushed into the water to appease the inner fire that tormented him, turning it instead in thermal waters. The area was basically a narrow passage between the steep mountain and the sea. At its narrowest the gorge was 15 meters wide. This meant that although the Greeks were numerically lower, at least the fighters would face a funnel that balanced the scale, as only a certain number of warriors from each side could fight at once. And yet it was a desperate move, as the Greeks would soon tire while the Persians always counted with waves of fresh troops.

According to Herodotus, after coming to the sanctuary of Delphi, the Spartans received from the oracle the following prophecy:

> *For you, inhabitants of wide-wayed Sparta,*
> *Either your great and glorious city must be wasted by Persian men,*
> *Or if not that, then the bound of Lacedaemon*
> *must mourn a dead king, from Heracles' line.*
> *The might of bulls or lions will not restrain him with opposing strength;*
> *for he has the might of Zeus.*
> *I declare that he will not be restrained until he utterly tears apart one of these.*

Or a king of Sparta died, or Sparta fell. Consider how this prophecy could have influenced Leonidas. Suddenly, a heavy burden of responsibility on his shoulders had been downloaded. This monstrous doom, that would kill of shock most and make them sweat and shake, was received by the king with dignity and sense of royal duty. The

mission of any Spartan was sacrificing his life for his country if needed. It was natural and joyful for them.

In the summer of 480 BCE, the Peloponnesian troops reached Thermopylae and camped up there. There were about eighty men of Mycenae, 200 of Phlius, 400 of Corinth, 400 of Thebes, 500 of Mantinea, 500 of Tegea, 700 of Thespiae, 1,000 of Phocis, 1,120 of Arcadia and all the men of Locris. The Athenians were absent because they had put their hoplites and commitment to the naval fleet, which also was ridiculous compared to the Persian navy. But the gang that should have received cheers and applause, the formation whose mere presence instilled courage and confidence to all military buildup, was the group that showed only 300 Spartans for battle. No more Spartans came because their city was celebrating a religious holiday, which prohibited Army mobilization. And for the Spartans, the first and most important was to make peace with the gods and not violate the ritual order of existence.

So the Greeks were together about 7,000—seven thousand Greeks against 250,000 Persians (175,000 according to other modern historians). Imagine the variety of the colorful congregation: the brightness of the bronze, the solemn atmosphere, the commentaries on the diverse gangs, the emblems on the shields, the typical rivalry gossip in the military, the feeling of togetherness, respect and a common destiny. The entire camp had to be surrounded by an aura of manliness and heroism. These Greeks, mostly hoplites, were well instructed. Since their younger days they were used to handling weapons and exercise the body. However, the only "professional" army was the Spartan, because in other places the hoplites lived with their families, trained on their own and were only called in case of war; while in Sparta they were permanently militarized since childhood under the terrible discipline that characterized them, and never stopped the training.

Among the Persians, however, the situation was very different. Although undoubtedly they had the numerical advantage and equipment, most were young men who had been conscripted and had little military training. However, they had highly specialized units. Unlike the Greeks,

who, conditioned by their land, had stubbornly perfected the infantry level, the Persians had a formidable cavalry, chariots and excellent archers. In the vast plains, plateaus and steppes of Asia, to dominate this type of highly mobile forms of warfare was essential. The Persian Empire also had "the immortals," a famous elite unit composed of ten thousand chosen among the Persian and Median aristocracy that, under General Hydarnes, formed the royal guard of Xerxes. The officers also consisted of Persian members of the aristocracy.

Xerxes camped his troops at the entrance, in Trachis. Leonidas, as soon he reached Thermopylae, rebuilt the ancient wall of two meters in the narrowest part of the pass, quartering the troops behind him. Having been informed that there was a path around the pass that led to the other side, he sent a thousand Phocaeans to defend it.

Xerxes, who could not conceive that the Greeks be obstinate in fighting, sent an emissary to parley with Leonidas, encouraging him to put his arms aside. The soldier's laconic reply was "Come and catch them." That night, when a Locris hoplite of defeatist tone commented that the cloud of Persian archers' arrows would darken the sky and turn the day into night, Leonidas answered: "Then we'll fight in the shade."

The next morning, the troops appeared in ranks of formation. The Persians had gathered thousands of Medes and Kysios (Iranian peoples) and stationed at the entrance of the pass. At first, their orders were to capture alive the Greeks, as the Emperor thought he could place chains on them and display them in Persia as trophies, the style of the later Roman triumphs. Leonidas, meanwhile, made the Greeks form in the narrow gorge, and took his royal position at the right end of the phalanx. He decided not to mix the different peoples of his contingent. In his experience the soldiers preferred that well-known comrades died beside them, and it was more difficult that they fled in combat if those who they abandoned were lifetime family and friends. Leonidas put his Spartans to the front of the formation, as a spearhead. They would be the first to engage.

Ominously the Persians advanced and entered the gorge. The Spartans sang the paean with religious solemnity. When the Persians began raiding with terrifying shouting, the relentless meat grinder of the Spartan phalanx began to operate silently. The Persians crashed into the wall of shields with a deafening roar, waving their arms and finally skewering into the Spartan spears. Imagine the sight of that.

The blood that had run, the orders at the top of lungs, the cries of war and of pain, the cuts and stabbings, the reddened spears in and out rhythmically as sinister spikes from the shield of chest-plates splashed with blood, attacking accurately the weaknesses of poorly protected enemy bodies; the shocks and bumps, the terrible wounds, the bodies of the fallen and the Spartans maintaining calm and silence in the midst of the confusion and the terrible din of battle; the Persians, brave but ineffective, immolating themselves in a glorious feat. The Spartans seemed to be everywhere, and there they were, inspiring the other Greeks to imitate them, pointing out that victory was possible and stirring the moral. By their conduct they were proving that their socialism of union and sacrifice was clearly superior to any other political system, and that they were better prepared to face the Iron Age.

Unlike Leonidas, Xerxes did not fight. Sitting on his throne of gold, located in a suitable place, he watched with horror what was happening: his troops were being slaughtered catastrophically. The Persians had much lighter and ineffective armor than the heavy Greek cuirass, as the type of Persian fight was based on mobility, speed, fluidity and flexibility of large crowds, while the Greek was organized resistance, accuracy, coordination, diamond hardness and willingness to stand together as one compact rock before the onslaught of the ocean waves. Furthermore, the Persian spears were shorter and less stout, and could not reach the Spartans with ease. They fell by the hundreds, while the Spartans were barely injured. The best Persian officers fell when, going by the head of their troops, tried to inspire them and were wounded by Hellenic weapons. When Leonidas ordered to relieve the Spartans, passing other units into combat, the situation continued: the Persians fell massacred. It

is said that three times Xerxes jumped from his throne to see what was going on, perhaps as a football coach sees his team thrashed. Leonidas would only say, “the Persians have many men, but no warrior.”

General Hidarnes removed the contingent of Kysios and Medes, discovering a floor mangled with corpses. Then he made enter his immortals in combat, convinced that they would change the course of battle. Leonidas ordered his Spartans to be on the forefront again. The immortals advanced impassively on the bodies of their fallen compatriots and furiously rammed the phalanx. The Spartans suffered some casualties, but their formation did not break. For their part, the immortals were pierced by long spears and fell by the dozens, wounded and dead. Many fell into the waters of the Gulf of Malis, where many, for not knowing how to swim, or sunk by the weight of their weapons and armor, were carried by ocean currents and drowned.

The Spartans implemented their more tested and complicated tactics, demonstrating the perfect instruction they alone possessed. They opened gaps where unsuspecting enemies penetrated, only to be shut down and massacred by rapid spears poking from all sites. Other times they simulated panic and retreated in disarray, after which the Persians emboldened, pursued in disarray. But the Spartans, displaying their mastery in close order, turned quickly returning to phalanx form, each taking place at the last moment and terribly reaping the Persian ranks, sowing the ground with corpses and watering it with their blood. So passed a whole day. When evening came, the fighters retreated and had their rest. It was considered bad luck fighting at night (it was more difficult that the dead found their way to the afterlife). The Greeks were exhausted but in high spirits. The Persians, on the other hand, were fresher but their morale hit rock bottom. They must have wondered if they were as bad or if it was the Greeks who were so good.

The next morning the fight resumed. Xerxes commanded fresh Persians, hoping that maybe they made a dent in the exhausted Greek defenders. Nothing was further from reality: wave after wave, the Greeks massacred the enemy again. The terror began to spread among the

Persians. Many times they tried to escape the Spartans, and the officers lashed them with whips to force them to combat.

At that point, Xerxes had to be amazed and desperate at the same time. Its fleet had failed to defeat the Greek fleet at Cape Artemision, and he could not outflank Thermopylae by sea. Then came the betrayal, the heroes' curse. A local shepherd named Ephialtes asked to speak to Xerxes and, in exchange for a hefty sum of money, he revealed the existence of the road that skirted the ravine, in a process archetypally similar to what happened many centuries later in the fortress of Montségur of the Cathars. General Hidarnes, in command of the immortals, crossed the road guided by Ephialtes. When he saw at the distance a few Greeks ready for the fight, he hesitated and asked Ephialtes if they were Spartan. He told him they were Phocis, and Hidarnes continued. Since then, the die was cast: the Greeks were doomed. They were going to lose the battle to death.

Leonidas, meanwhile, received messengers (probably repentant Thessalians fighting under the Persians) who informed him how they would be surrounded by the enemy. The Greeks took counsel immediately. Leonidas knew already that he would lose the battle. He ordered all the Greeks to retire except his Spartans and the Thebans. The Thespians, led by Demophilus, decided to remain on their own will, and so they did, covering their small town with glory. When only Spartans, Thebans and Thespians remained (1,400 men at first, less than the casualties suffered during the fighting), the troops breakfasted. Leonidas told his men: "This is our last meal among the living. Prepare well friends, because tonight we will dine in Hades!"

The Greeks formed, this time together, the phalanx. Before them, the vast army; and the immortals to their rear. Instead of attacking the immortals to perhaps defeat them and fight their way to the withdrawal (which would be useless because it would open the Greek doors to the Persians), Leonidas ordered to attack the bulk of the Persian army, in a magnificent display of heroism and courage, with the goal of maintaining the fight for as long as possible and give time to Greece to prepare. They

knew they were going to die in any case, so they chose to die heroically, showing an immense greatness. The Greeks were aware that this was no longer a resistance with hope, but a struggle of sacrifice in which the goal was a passionate and furious rush into the arms of glory; inflicting the enemy the greater damage in the process and delaying the invasion.

In the middle of combat, and having killed countless Persians, Leonidas fell. Around his body, a hellish turmoil was formed while Greeks and Persians fought for its possession. Several times he fell into enemy hands and several times he was recovered by the Greeks. Eventually the body was secured by the Spartans that, constantly fighting, retreated to the Phocaean wall.

At one point, the Thebans separated from the bulk of the Greek phalanx. For long instants they fought valiantly, but in the end, exhausted, crazed and looking lost, threw their weapons and spread their hands in supplication to surrender to the Persians who, in the adrenaline rush, even killed a few more. The rest of Thebes was captured. After the battle, the Persians would mark them on the forehead with hot irons and sell them as slaves. What helped them to surrender? What did they get? Life? A life of slavery and humiliation? Would it not have been better and more dignified to die in battle, fighting to the end?

The Spartans and Thespians, meanwhile, continued to struggle beside the Phocaean wall. Under pressure and shock loads the wall collapsed, crushing warriors of the two armies. Fighting continued, deaf and ruthless. Many fell exhausted and could not raise again. Others died pierced by the enemy metal. When finally Hidarnes appeared in front of the immortals, the few Greeks who remained, almost all Spartans, climbed a small hill to defend themselves more easily. They put their backs against a wall to avoid being completely unprotected. There were less than a hundred Greeks against at least 100,000 Persians (some say 150,000 and others speak of figures far higher). There, every Greek was facing more than a thousand Persians.

The time of final resistance witnessed the most flaming heroism of

history. The last fight on the hill of Thermopylae has been the inspiration for countless works of art over centuries. Probably only Spartans were left. Almost all of them were wounded and bleeding from several wounds. Their spears were broken and their shields shattered, so they resorted to the sword. Those who were unarmed after breaking or losing the sword used rocks to hit the enemy, or fanatically rushed upon him to kill him with their hands or teeth, fist, choking, breaking, hitting, crunching, tearing and biting with superhuman ferocity, in a vicious and bloody melee. Were not these men possessed by the legendary holy wrath, that of the berserkers and the inspired warriors? They well could have asked: "Why do you fight, if you will lose? You are shattered, on the brink of death and closer to the other world than to Earth. Why do ye keep fighting?" But those were improper thoughts for heroes. Their behavior far exceeded anything in this world. Reason had been trampled under the feet of the Hellenic will, which squeezed at the maximum the forces from those heroes. It was a rage that came from the above. It was blind fanaticism; an invincible, visceral, red and instinctive feeling. It was a fight to the end.

The Persians failed to reduce those brave and, totally demoralized, retreated. Then their archers advanced, and loosed successive rains of arrows that finished off the resistant. A massive, imperial army of hundreds of thousands fighting dozens (probably around a hundred) of crazed Greeks, and still they had to beat them from afar because in melee they could never win!

When the last Spartan—exhausted, delirious and bleeding, with his mind set on his wife, his children, his country and the sky—fell riddled with arrows shot from a distance, the battle of Thermopylae ended. The Greeks had lost and the Persians won. The fallen had furiously slain themselves to the last man, gentlemanly consummating their oath of honor and eternal fidelity and ascended the steps of immortal glory. In a single battle those fallen men achieved a higher luminance than what a thousand priests and philosophers have achieved in lifetimes of dedication.

To imagine the fear that this slaughter of Persians injected into the heart of Xerxes, suffice it to say that he ordered the corpse of Leonidas to be beheaded and crucified. (Similarly, William the Conqueror viciously ordered to mutilate the body of King Harold after the Battle of Hastings against the Anglo-Saxons, who also defended themselves at a high point). This is much more revealing than it seems, since the Persians had the tradition to honor a brave, dead enemy. But Leonidas had shown him something too far above his respect, something terrifying that turned upside down all he took for granted and knew about the Great West. Other Greek corpses were thrown into a mass grave. Xerxes asked, beside himself in his trauma, if in Greece there were more men like those 300 Spartans. We can well imagine what he felt when he was informed that there were 8,000 Spartiates in Sparta, brave and trained as the 300 fallen.

Let us now do a little count of the battle of Thermopylae: 7,000 Greeks against (say) 250,000 Persians. The Greek side had 4,000 dead, including Leonidas, his 300 Spartans and 700 Thespians. But the Persian side had no more and no less than 20,000 people dead, including two brothers of Xerxes: Abrocomes and Hyperanthes. That is, an army thirty times smaller than the enemy inflicts losses five times greater than what themselves suffered. Proportionally this means a triumph of 150 to 1. Comment is superfluous, although we know that, after all, the cold numerical figures understand nothing of heroism and will.

What happened after the battle? Was the sacrifice in vain? What did the fallen get? Buying time for the naval fleet and the Greek counter-offensive. The Persians continued their march to Athens, finding it empty because its inhabitants had been evacuated during the fighting at Thermopylae. The Persians sacked and burned what they could. In the battle of Salamis in the same year of 480 BCE, the Greek fleet defeated the Persian in glorious combat. Xerxes had to retire with an important part of his army, for without the fleet, logistics and supply were precarious. He, therefore, left 80,000 Persians (some say 300,000) under the command of his brother, General Mardonius, to continue with

the campaign.

A few months later, at the Battle of Plataea in 479 BCE, 5,000 Spartans along with their allies, under the leadership of King Pausanias of Sparta, decisively defeated the Persians and General Mardonius fell in combat. Persia was defeated. Greece won the Second Greco-Persian War. The sacrifice of Thermopylae, therefore, was not in vain.

The poet Simonides wrote a poem in honor of the fallen Spartans at Plataea. Below, an elegiac couplet:

> *O Stranger, send the news home to the people of Sparta that here we are laid to rest:*
> *the commands they gave us have been obeyed.*

What was the catastrophic possibility that Leonidas prevented? Had he withdrawn from the fight, the Persian cavalry would have attacked in mass and in the open, closing from behind and from the sides. Persia would have conquered all of Greece and probably a significant portion of Eastern Europe; perhaps even beyond the Balkans and the Danube. (At that time there was no Vienna that would stop it.) This would have been a disaster for all posterity of ethnic Europeans.

Before parting for the fight, Queen Gorgo, wife of Leonidas, asked: “What should I do if you don’t come back?” The short answer was: “Marry one worth of me and have strong sons to serve Sparta.” In the perpetuation of the race there is no acceptable pause. The road is inexorable and the mystery of the blood is transmitted to the new heirs.

The Battle of Thermopylae was archetypal. Leonidas (a Heracleid descendant, ancestor of the Spartan kings) fell on the spot where, according to tradition, Heracles had rushed to the waters to calm his inner fire. There a statue was placed of a lion (an animal whose skin Heracles put on and contained in it the same name of Leonidas). There is a simple inscription on a plate, “Go tell the Spartans, stranger passing by, that here, obedient to their laws, we lie.”

SUBSEQUENT HISTORY OF SPARTA

> *A society in which corruption takes a hold is blamed for effeminacy: for the appreciation of war, and the delight in war, perceptibly diminish in such a society, and the conveniences of life are now just as eagerly sought after as were military and gymnastic honours formerly.*
>
> —Nietzsche, The Joyful Science

All Spartan education was considered admirable by the peoples around Sparta, who greatly respected its courageous neighbor though sometimes as a foe. Plato himself, when he wrote his *Republic* refers to State measures which seem directly taken from the Spartan laws, because those laws inspired him and were also admired by Aristotle—with some reservation as to the supposedly totalitarian and tyrannical Ephorate. (However, at the time of Aristotle Sparta was no longer the same.) In a time when the Greek city-states were already in decline, voices were raised calling for the adoption of the Spartan model. They were the fascist of the age. Anyway, Spartan laws provided a stability that the other Hellene States never knew.

In the sixth century BCE, Sparta launched new conquests over the neighboring villages. About the attack on Tegea, Herodotus said that one of the reasons was that the Spartans sought the mythological bones of Orestes (son of the legendary King Agamemnon, leader of all Greeks in the Trojan War), considered one of the distant ancestors of the Spartan village. The Pythia of Delphi promised victory to the Spartans if they found the bones. And sure enough, they found them and won. They found no normal bones, but a skeleton of immense size, like the giant heroes alluded to by Homer.

In the aforementioned case of Tegea, the Spartans were bold not to

annex it but establish a treaty, by which Tegea was to provide soldiers, weapons and other equipment, and teamed with Sparta to follow it in all its foreign policy strategies. In return, Tegea could remain independent. By similar policies, Sparta won the states around the Peloponnese, eventually including Argos, Arcadia and Corinth to the point that, after the invasion of the Persians in 490 BCE, Sparta was the greatest Hellenic power, well above Athens.

According to Herodotus, at the Battle of Plataea in 479 BCE 5,000 Spartans fought with 5,000 perioeci and 35,000 helots. Only the Spartans were consummate warriors, while others were forced to take up arms, and the huge number of helots (completely lacking in military training) were reduced to cannon fodder. In the period of greatest population, Sparta had 200,000 helots and 9,000 Spartan families. In 480 BCE there were a total of just fewer than 8,000 mobilized Spartan hoplites.

The Greek poet Aeschylus (525-456 BCE) put into the mouth of the mother of Xerxes: "I seem to see two virgins superbly dressed. One richly dressed in the fashion of the Persians; the other, after the manner of the Dorians. The majesty of both surpass the other women. Both a flawless beauty and of the same race" (*The Persians*). With this we see that even at that time there were individuals who were aware of the absurdity of these enmities in people of the same origin.

In 464 BCE a major earthquake hit Sparta that destroyed the gymnasium while the ephebes, the cream of the Spartan youth, were exercising, killing many of them. Diodorus Siculus exaggerated that about 20,000 Spartans died, as Plutarch did when saying that only five houses were left standing. However, the damage had to be large, and this tragedy helped the helots who, taking advantage of the disorder that the void created, initiated another revolt confident in their overwhelming numerical superiority over the Spartans. After the Messenian helots rebelled, the Laconian helots joined and even two perioeci communities: Thouria (in Messenia) and Ethea (in Laconia). Thus began the Third Messenian War, also known as the Mount Ithome rebellion.

The open rebellion was crushed by the Spartans effectively and without the slightest mercy. The spoils of the revolt were removed to Mount Ithome from which, under the Spartan siege, the Messenians were engaged for five years in a guerrilla war against the Spartans: also resorting to guerrilla tactics by using their fanatic "puppies" in selective hunting activities, repression and punishment. The Athenians sent to Sparta a military contingent of four thousand men led by the patriot and pro-Spartan Cimon to help them but the Spartans rejected the help, and the contingent returned aggravated to Athens in what is known as "the Ithome insult."

After these five years, the Spartans, moved by a Delphic oracle, which advised to let go "the supplicants of Zeus Itometa," let them escape the Peloponnese. The Spartan government further strengthened afterwards its severity toward those helots, while Athens endorsed a military pact with the fugitives, recognizing them not as helots but as representatives of a legitimate Messenian State under military occupation.

THE TWILIGHT OF SPARTA

Should anyone ask me whether I think that the laws of Lycurgus still remain unchanged at this day, I certainly could not say that with any confidence whatever.

For I know that formerly the Lacedaemonians preferred to live together at home with moderate fortunes rather than expose themselves to the corrupting influences of flattery as governors of dependent states.

And I know too that in former days they were afraid to be found in possession of gold; whereas nowadays there are some who even boast of their possessions.

There were expulsions of aliens in the former days, and to live abroad was illegal; and I have no doubt that the purpose of these regulations was to keep the citizens from being demoralized by contact with foreigners; and now I have no doubt that the fixed ambition of those who are thought to be first among them is to live to their dying day as governors in a foreign land.

There was a time when they would fain be worthy of leadership; but now they strive far more earnestly to exercise rule than to be worthy of it.

Therefore in times past the Greeks would come to Lacedaemon and beg her to lead them against reputed wrongdoers; but now many are calling on one another to prevent a revival of Lacedaemonian supremacy.

—Xenophon, Constitution of the Lacedaemonians

The rivalry between Sparta and Athens eventually culminated in the Peloponnesian War (431-404 BCE). This war had a certain spiritual-

ideological character: the Athenians saw Sparta as a state of brutality, oppression of the individual and uncompromising stiffness; while, for the Spartans, Athens was a hotbed of decadence and effeminacy that threatened to contaminate all Hellas. In 415 BCE, Spartan emissaries came to the sanctuary of Delphi. The oracle gave them a grim omen: soon the Spartans would see the walls of their worst enemy reduced to rubble, but they themselves would soon succumb to a bitter defeat. This was perhaps the first warning about the coming decline of Sparta.

Lysander, head of the Spartan fleet, effectively defeated the Athenian Alcibiades in 404 BCE, and awarded the victory to his homeland. After long and painful years of siege, hardships, and battles against Athens, when finally Sparta triumphed Lysander simply wrote in his memoirs, in another sign of brevity: "Athens has fallen." Lysander was a *mothax* (bastard or mestizo), for his father was a Spartan and his mother a helot. However, during his childhood, he was accepted for some reason in the brutal training system of the Agoge. Lysander was, however, a soldier turned politician and conspirator, and stroked ideas about a new revolution in Spartan laws. The mere fact that an individual like Lysander had reached such a high position implied that something was starting to smell rotten in Sparta.

The war resulted in the ruin of Athens, consolidating the Spartan hegemony. That same year 404 BCE the walls of Athens were demolished to the sound of Spartan fifes, as predicted in Delphi, and the government of Athens was taken by "the thirty tyrants." But Spartan supremacy would be short because it had been achieved at the sacrifice of the best Spartan blood and, as has been said, dark forebodings hovered over the city. Their numbers dwindled. The hardness of the Spartans increasingly produced hatred by the subjected people, which multiplied devilishly. Sparta was aging.

On the other hand, Sparta was usually very jealous about its citizenship laws (to be the son of a Spartan father and mother, and going through eugenics, instruction and admission to the Army Syssitias), so that with the advent of crossbreeding and bloody wars, in which the best

Spartans fell, the number of real Spartiates was reduced from 10,000 during its apogee to just over a thousand, although at least those few Spartans remained just like their ancestors. They'd chosen to be, at all costs, a select few at the top, dominating an inferior majority and remaining loyal to the laws of Lycurgus until the end of their national agony. As a select group, they were obstinate in resisting and refused to make concessions or share privileges, remaining increasingly proud as their numbers were declining more and more. All this demographic policy contrasted, then, with the Athenian: which artificially swelled the numbers of its population (Athens had about five times the population of Sparta) by non-white immigration, uncontrolled reproduction and lack of eugenics.

This resulted in dirty and dingy slums and narrow winding streets, where dark slaves accumulated and infections, rats and pests spread. The defeat of Athens also motivated the circulating of riches as trophies to Sparta. Plutarch wrote, "gold and silver money first flowed into Sparta, and with money, greed and a desire for wealth prevailed through the agency of Lysander, who, though incorruptible himself, filled his country with the love of riches and with luxury, by bringing home gold and silver from the war, and thus subverting the laws of Lycurgus."

In 398 BCE, King Agesilaus ascended to the twin throne of Sparta. A year later, another evil omen happened. While a priest carried out a sacrifice, horrified, he glimpsed a nefarious, archetypal sign during the ritual and announced with great alarm that Sparta was on the lookout for its enemies. At that moment, according to the old man, Sparta was seriously threatened. In view of the prostration of external enemies, the omen was probably not taken with the seriousness it deserved. Few would suspect that the omen was referring to the internal enemies of Sparta.

Agesilaus discovered a year later, in 397 BCE, a conspiracy hatched by Lysander against the laws of Lycurgus. In this conspiracy an individual named Cinadon played an important role. He was part of the *hypomeiones* or "inferior" Spartan citizens degraded for cowardice in

battle; for failing to provide the stipulated rations of the Syssitia, or for not having being admitted to any Syssitia due to any dishonorable reasons. The point of this conspiracy is that it seemed to involve all those who were not authentic Spartans, i.e., helots, perioeci, and the degraded Spartans—all of which, according to the same Cinadon, wanted to "eat raw" the elite of the real Spartans. Having made their confessions, Cinadon and his clique of conspirators were driven through the city of Sparta to spearhead and under the harassment of the whips. After being carried to Kaiada they were executed and thrown into the pit.

Agesilaus was accused of breaking an old Lycurgus law prohibiting to make war for a long time to the same enemy so that he could not learn how to defend himself, as Agesilaus' incursions into Boeotia practically taught the Thebans to fight. In 382 BCE Sparta took Thebes, but this victory was cursed as Sparta had decayed and the Thebans were being strengthened. Four years later, the Thebans succeeded in expelling the Spartans in the first political sign that Sparta was decaying. Years later, 7,000 highly motivated Thebans under the charismatic leader Epaminondas rose against Sparta and defeated them at the Battle of Leuctra in 371 BCE. In that battle only 1,200 Spartans fought: all that remained of them. Four hundred of them died. It was said that when the Theban soldiers entered in Sparta during the street fighting that followed, and they were asking, "Where are the Spartans?" and an old man answered, "There are not anymore, otherwise you wouldn't be here."

After the invasion, the intelligent Thebans stroke another huge blow to the power of Sparta: they freed the helots. The city of Messenia, in a record time of only seventy-four days, was surrounded by a wall and the Ithome Fortress rebuilt and converted in an acropolis, symbolizing its emancipation from the Spartan yoke: an emancipation they sought to preserve at all costs.

The Spartans had fallen, but the Thebans had kept their blood and vitality pure. They had an elite unit called the sacred gang. Throughout Greece, Theban women (described by Dicaearchus as blondes) were already considered, above the Spartan, the most beautiful of Hellas. The

Thebans descended from Thessalian invaders: magnificent horsemen that arrived to Greece at the time of the great invasions. After being expelled from the Peloponnese by the Dorians, they established their capital, Thebes, in Boeotia. The Battle of Leuctra finally consummated the Thessalians' revenge against the Dorians.

Since 640 BCE no army had ever managed to subdue Sparta. The Spartan power was over. Its laws of iron and stone—wisely enacted and recorded in blood and fire—could not eternally restrain racial miscegenation while in disastrous wars died the best biological specimens and the spiritual elite. There was betrayal, disloyalty, memory loss, and a fall. From here, the history of Sparta is shameful, desperate, sad and tragic. One almost feels embarrassed before her in contrast to her previous heroism. It could be said it was humiliating for their heirs, but we must add that many of them were no longer heirs of Dorian Sparta since it no longer ran in their bodies the most important heritage: pure Dorian blood.

The racial miscegenation and the fratricidal war with Athens had greatly weakened many Greek city-states, so that they fell prey to the Indo-European new star: the Macedonians of Philip II (382-336 BCE), a Greek village that had remained on the periphery of Greece living in semi-barbarian state, retaining the hardness of its origins and purity of blood. Using the Thessaly League, the Macedonians began to penetrate gradually in Greece. In 367 BCE the Aetolian League was formed. In 339 BCE the Macedonians had already mastered Hellas, including Sparta. The son of Philip II, the famous Alexander the Great, conquered the greatest empire ever known, from Greece to India, and from the Caucasus to Egypt.

In 330 BCE, King Agis III of Sparta attacked Antipater, Alexander's lieutenant, but was defeated and killed at the battle of Megalopolis. During the Lamian War, after the death of Alexander the Great in 323 BCE, Sparta was too weak even to participate.

During the fourth century BCE there was a reform by an Epitadeus,

an ambitious ephor that, for disagreements with his own son, drafted a law that all citizens could give their inheritance to whom they pleased. This had huge influence on the distribution of land plots. However, the subsequent ruin of Sparta was not the result of this law; the wording of it was the result of a silent decline of mind and body, materially manifested in blood contamination, the disintegration of the noble families and the evils resulting from this.

During this decadent time of miscegenation and corruption, women's freedom turned against Sparta. Traditionally being owners and managers of the farm and home, they became greedy and selfish. The materialism that invaded Sparta from Athens took root in women with ease. They forgot their athletic naturalness; the physical exertion, and their role as severe mothers; they also forgot the gravity of the sacred wife and to inspire hope and contemplation. Instead they embraced luxury, comfort and embellishments. Foolishly, during the decay Spartan women came to hoard most of the wealth of Sparta.

By the end of the fourth century BCE Sparta was surrounded by defensive walls, breaking her tradition and revealing the world that had lost confidence in herself.

Agis of Sparta (reigned between 244-241 BCE) attempted to reinstate the laws of Lycurgus. He had been educated in patriotism and dreamed in restoring the greatness of his country. By then, lots of land were unevenly distributed and badly exploited, and he wanted to make it more equitable. Agis postponed land redistribution to join the Achaean League Aratus of Sicyon, challenging the growing power of the Macedonians. In 243 BCE, the Achaean League defeated the Macedonian garrison in Corinth, resulting in a brief expansion of the league. But during the king's absence, resistance to his reforms was implemented by his co-ruler, King Leonidas II. This traitor king, unworthy of his name, was the perfect example of Spartan decline: he married a Persian woman and liked to keep in his court an oriental-style luxury which would have caused his death when Sparta was in its prime. As Agis returned he was arrested by the ephors who, now completely corrupted, condemned him

to death. Agis was thus the first king of Sparta to be executed by the government.

In 230 BCE only 700 Spartans were left: divided, confused and aimless. The differentiation of castes and racial barriers had collapsed. The plots of land were in the hands of women who managed them greedily, and of helots who owned their own land. Plutarch wrote:

> *Thus there were left of the old Spartan families not more than seven hundred, and of these there were perhaps a hundred who possessed land and allotment; while the ordinary throng, without resources and without civic rights, lived in enforced idleness, showing no zeal or energy in warding off foreign wars, but ever watching for some opportunity to subvert and change affairs at home.*

Cleomenes III of Sparta (reigned 235-219 BCE) attempted to make another return to the laws of Lycurgus. His goal was to create a group of Spartans that restituted the ancient power of the city. After a series of encouraging alliances with Tegea and the recovery of Manatee from the Arcadians, Sparta seemed to be reborn as opposed to the Achaean League. Spartan austerity was reestablished as well as the team meals, and defeated the Achaean League in 228 BCE, on the banks of the river Lyceum. And in 227 BCE Sparta defeated it again near Leuctra. The victorious Cleomenes returned to Sparta covered with prestige. He executed the corrupt ephors and abolished the institution of the Ephorate. Sparta continued to conquer and triumph: it annexed Manatee and in 226 BCE defeated the Achaean League again in the Battle of Hecatombaeon. This time, supported by Egypt, Sparta was literally re-conquering the Peloponnese.

The leaders of the Achaean League, frightened by the revival of the legendary Spartan power, decided to end its anti-Macedonian policy and cynically requested the Macedonians' help to deter the new Spartans. So Aratus of Sicyon sought help from his supposed enemy, the king

Antigonus III of Macedonia, offering control of Corinth. The Aetolian League and the Macedonian League, united, gathered an army of 30,000 men who beat the 10,000 Spartans and their allies in the Battle of Sellasia of 222 BCE. There definitely Spartan power was extinguished; the new Spartans fell, their walls demolished, and Cleomenes exiled to Alexandria. After trying from there a *coup* with the help of Egypt, he died in 220 BCE. With him the royal Heracled lineage disappeared.

Both Agis IV and Cleomenes III are tragic figures: men of quality who were born too late, representing the dying voice of the Spartiate archetype during the sinister sunset. However, these kings failed to understand the real cause of Sparta's collapse: the luxuries of civilization and dissolution of the originating elements of Dorian blood that built Sparta.

In 208 BCE, Nabis, later known as "Tyrant of Sparta," ascended the throne. Since the double lineage of the Heracletes had disappeared with the king Cleomenes III, he made himself the sole king of Sparta, building again the defensive walls that surrounded Sparta and trying to revitalize the reforms attempted by Agis IV and Cleomenes III. Nabis introduced, with the help of the Aetolian League, a kind of democracy in Sparta. This was his biggest mistake: it gave freedom to many helots, who would soon mix their blood with the Spartans. The *mothakes* (mestizos) began to influence the very Spartan national body, and *neodamodeis* or "new citizens" emerged.

In 205 BCE Sparta allied with Rome in the hope of removing the Macedonians. But in 197 BCE Rome turned against Sparta, establishing an alliance with other Greek states. The Achaean League of 192 BCE forced Sparta to join her to monitor its movements, but when Nabis felt that the League had overreached its affairs he seceded. Philopoemen led the Achaean army that burst in Sparta and executed the anti-Achaean leaders, including Nabis, knocking again Sparta's walls; freeing the slaves, and abolishing the Agoge. Everything that in this period the Achaeans did against Sparta was an expression of the unconscious terror they felt about the possible resurrection of Sparta's power and it was

then, when Sparta was weak, that they wanted to finish it off to prevent any future outbreaks.

In 146 BCE Sparta was conquered by the Roman legions. Under Roman rule, some Spartan customs survived, but stripped from their essence. The festival of Artemis became a grotesque ceremony of simply whipping children in public, sometimes to the death. In the tranquility of the *Pax Romana* Sparta was devoted to these abhorrent practices, which attracted large numbers of morbid tourists around the Mediterranean.

In 267 CE Sparta was sacked by the Heruli Germanic people—the same people who would depose the last Roman emperor of the West two centuries later. The Germans were the new star of Europe, and they would be for many centuries. Their uncontaminated will to power together with their barbaric mentality drove them to conquer and dominate. During this time they were rushing into a Roman Empire already decadent and beyond recognition, in which Christianity was inevitably undermining the sacred pillars of the pagan, militarist and patriarchal society that the Romans once had.

After the Roman disaster against the Goths at the Battle of Hadrianople (378 CE), the Spartan phalanx defeated a band of marauding Germans in a flash of strength. But in 396 CE Sparta was destroyed by the Visigoths of King Alaric I, who ended up being in charge of administering the *coup de grace* to an already unrecognizable Roman Empire.

Near the ruins of Sparta it was built the town of Mistras. The Romans, after conquering Southeast Europe, built on Mistras a new city they called Lacedaemonia, as Sparta was called before. According to Byzantine sources, in the 10th century large areas of the territory of Laconia were still pagan.

Today Sparta is a set of simple, rough and not showy ruins. In the words of Thucydides:

Suppose the city of Sparta to be deserted, and nothing left but

the temples and the ground-plan. Distant ages would be very unwilling to believe that the power of the Lacedaemonians was at all equal to their fame... Whereas, if the same fate befell the Athenians, the ruins of Athens would strike the eye, and we should infer their power to have been twice as great as it really is.

THE LESSON OF SPARTA

"I think that civilization tends more to refine vice than perfecting virtue."

—Edmond Thiaudière

A nation as exceptional as Sparta, which ravaged its enemies in an era when man was infinitely harder than now; a nation that was feared in "an age that everything grinds and splashes of blood" had an exceptional mission: to point out a path to us, the children of the West and therefore heirs of Sparta. That was the purpose of Lycurgus, and the Delphic Sibyl grasped it as soon as she saw these peoples, sanctifying their mission. But Sparta also signaled to us the only weakness of such a civilization, so that its decline may be a lesson for us, so that the great pain of Spartan discipline and military asceticism had not been in vain.

What happened to Sparta has happened to every civilization: it succumbed to the multiracial curse, the gold of the traders, the corruption of women, the softness of men, the relaxation, the luxuries and the fratricidal wars; although the laws of Lycurgus extended their glory and agony. The best and bravest men in Greece were finished. Then its body was trampled by purer and more vigorous and youthful peoples.

But what is the moral of the story? That the awakening of European humanity, as once the awakening of Sparta, can occur only after the advent of a terrible racial trauma that acts as an initiation of the sort of a "mystical death." Who will give Europe the dreaded initiation?

Sparta also teaches us something that we can not afford, something we should avoid at all costs, that quality men die without leaving abundant offspring: pure, protected and cultivated; procreated with congeners of identical racial quality. To cultivate the best blood is the

solution. Having a garden perfectly ordered and distributed is the solution. And Sparta was successful for a long time, but ended up failing. And it fell gnawed at its roots from the inside.

If today, therefore, we had to ask which country is more like Sparta in terms of its strategic location and methods, only Israel could give an answer. Jewry has realized that losing their head and being seduced by the confidence that overwhelms the victor is the moment of greatest danger, and therefore has established something so outrageous and incomprehensible at first glance as the State of Israel. Despite having conquered the West, thanks to Israel Jewry can even afford to be in an environment of danger and war. There, the enemy lies inside and constantly threatens to attack. There, only the oppression of the Palestinians and keeping themselves in perpetual guard ensures their safety and mentalizing to avoid decay. There they have a fanatical, hysterical, heavily armed and militarized people, surrounded by hostile neighbors that increase even more their paranoia, their racism, their self-defense mentality and eagerness to compensate, through quality, their numerical inferiority: feeding a feeling to be alone with the danger—an absolutely false feeling as they have on their feet the media of almost all the West.

Compared to the barbarism prevailing in the slums and shanty towns of the Third World; the Asian corporate organizations in the East, the troglodyte immigrants on the streets of the West, and the barbaric state consolidated in the State of Israel, the West appears to be extremely soft, old, head down, sissy, with no instincts or spine, and doomed. Today, the West transits its most vulnerable stage and this condition is increasing at accelerated pace. Our civilization will not be saved if it cannot awaken its primal instincts.

The Spartans were heirs of an archetype: the archetype of the European military state, of the ranks of disciplined troops; of pride, honor, austerity and sacrifice. The archetype, as we have said, would be inherited by others throughout history: such as the Romans, the Templars, the Spanish, the English and the Germans. The Spartans thus

formed part of the lineage of giants of the West and of human genius. In their case, they had the privilege of being no more or less than a sole and united people.

Let us compare today's Europeans with the Spartans. We feel panic in finding such physical, mental and spiritual degeneration; such stultification. European man, who used to be the hardest and most courageous of Earth, has become a weakling rag and degenerated biologically as a result of comfort. His mind is weak; his spirit fragile, and on top of that he considers himself the summit of the creation. But that man, just because of the blood he carries, has enormous potential.

The rules on which Sparta was seated were eternal and natural, as valid today as yesterday, but today the dualistic *mens sana in corpore sano* has been forgotten: the physical form has been abandoned producing soft, puny and deformed monsters; and the mental poisoning has produced similar abominations in the realm of the spirit. The modern European knows no pain, no honor, no blood, no war, no sacrifice, no camaraderie, no respect or combat; and thus he does not know the ancient and gentle goddesses known as Illumination, Gloria or Victoria.

All European revivals were inspired by the Greco-Roman or classical European spirit, of which the Spartan archetype was the most accomplished and refined expression. Sparta's immutable laws remain as valid today as yesterday, just waiting for someone to have the wisdom to obey them.

THE SURVIVAL OF THE SPARTAN ARCHETYPE

"Ye could well create the Overman. Not perhaps ye yourselves, my brethren! But into fathers and forefathers of the Overman could ye transform yourselves: and let that be your best creating!"

—Nietzche, Thus Spake Zarathustra

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